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THE proprietors of the Family Library feel themselves stimulated to increased exertions by the distinguished favour with which it has already been received.

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To render this Library still more worthy of patronage, the proprietors propose incorporating in it such works of interest and value as may appear in the various Libraries and Miscellanies now preparing in Europe, particularly the "National" and the "Edinburgh Cabinet" Libraries. All these productions, as they emanate from the press, will be submitted to a committee of literary gentlemen for inspection; and none will be reprinted but such as shall be found calculated to sustain the exalted character which this Library has already acquired.

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Recommendations of the Family Library.

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THE COMFORTER;

OR,

EXTRACTS

SELECTED

FOR THE CONSOLATION OF MOURNERS,

UNDER THE

BEREAVEMENT OF FRIENDS AND RELATIONS.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people."
ISAIAH xl. 1.

BY A VILLAGE PASTOR.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. & J. HARPER,
No. 82 CLIFF-STREET.
AND SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

MDCCCXXXII.

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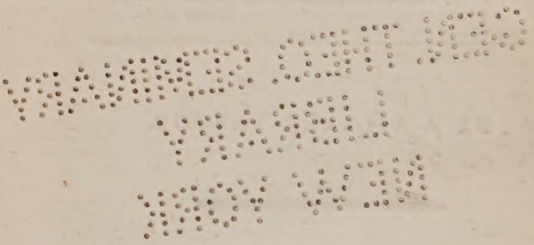

RECOMMENDATIONS.

Rev. and dear Sir,—

The work which you are preparing for publication is much needed for general distribution among Christians of all denominations. I am much pleased with the selections which you have made. They are the productions of men who were acquainted with sorrows sanctified by Divine grace, who have expressed these sorrows under the exercise of ardent piety; and, in consequence, are peculiarly calculated to administer comfort to the disconsolate and afflicted.

Very respectfully and truly yours, &c.

John A. Yates.

Union College, *Schenectady*,
April 4th, 1832.

I heartily concur in the above recommendation of Professor Yates. The selection of pieces is judicious, and may prove highly useful to the Christian in affliction.

W. C. Brownlee.

New-York, April 10, 1832.

My views perfectly coincide with the sentiments of Professor Yates and Rev. Dr. Brownlee, as above expressed; and I have no doubt the work will receive an extensive patronage and prove highly useful.

John A. Clare,
Assistant Minister of Christ Church, N. Y.

I concur in the utility of such a compilation, and have no doubt of its meeting with an extensive circulation.

James Milnor,
Rector of St. George's Chapel, N. Y.

April 11, 1832.

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THIS COMPILATION

IS AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED

TO THE

FOLLOWERS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

WITH A

FERVENT PRAYER THAT THE GREAT HEAD OF THE CHURCH
WOULD ACCOMPANY IT WITH HIS BLESSING, FOR
THE COMFORT AND EDIFICATION OF HIS
AFFLICTED PEOPLE,

BY

A VILLAGE PASTOR.

THE COMFORTER.

TRUST IN GOD, THE MOURNER'S CONSOLATION.

BY THE REV. GEORGE B. MILLER, A.M.

God, my supporter and my hope,
My help for ever near;
Thine arm of mercy holds me up,
When sinking in despair.

PSALM lxxiii. 25.—*Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.*

THAT admirable collection of divine songs which we call the Psalms contains instruction and advice suited to every rank and condition of life, and is wonderfully calculated to keep alive and assist the devotions of every Christian, in whatever state he finds himself; but if there is any situation for which these sacred hymns seem more peculiarly adapted than to any other, it is in a time of affliction. The grand and enlivening themes, indeed, which are presented in every Psalm, are of a nature to kindle the affections, and to raise the heart above the shifting scenes of life. But there are many that have been composed with immediate reference to a state of depression and sorrow; from which the wounded heart may derive the cordial of consolation; where it is taught, and as it were dragged along with a holy violence, to pour its woes and cares into the ear of a gracious God. So true are these observations, that we venture to assert, that there is scarce a page in that invaluable collection on which the troubled spirit may not find something to assuage its anguish.

Sweet is the returning light of day to the traveller who has lost himself in a thick forest during the night! Still more sweet to the soul is the refreshing ray of divine truth that dispels the mists of doubt and ignorance! How cheering to find ourselves in a place of safety, when we had long apprehended that we were on the point of perishing!

There is probably no Christian who has not, in a greater or less degree, had fears and doubts similar to those of the psalmist,—especially under the pressure of heavy affliction, though the soul may acknowledge that God is just, yet how hard is it to believe that God is good. It was an evidence of strong faith when David could declare, as in the 119th Psalm, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and *that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*" It seems to have been the fruit of deep experience, after having discovered, in the improvement of his heart, the happy effects of sanctified afflictions. Thrice blessed soul that can make the declaration in sincerity, while yet smarting under the wound of a recent loss.

Too generally, when a beloved object is withdrawn from our fond embrace, in the first anguish of grief we feel as though all were lost. It is as if our whole soul and life had been bound up in this one friend. We forget that we have others left that take an interest in our welfare. Above all, we are too ready to forget that God remains the same. Nature, while we are under the influence of excessive anguish, seems to present us with a blank,—a dark and dreary blank,—in which we can no longer discover the signs of Divine goodness. The soul resembles the mariner tossed in a frail bark on the wild waves of the trackless ocean in a dark and tempestuous night. Suddenly, the thunder rolls, the lightning descends—our faculties are stunned with the furious violence of the storm. When we begin to recover from our stupor, seeing nothing but destruction before us, we are disposed to murmur against the Divine government. Happy for us that we have a compassion-

ate High-priest,—one who has himself weathered the fiercest storms of life's tempestuous ocean,—who is not untouched with the feeling of our infirmities; one who intercedes for us while, in the violence of our grief, we fret against the Lord, and foolishly distrust his goodness; who prays in behalf of his tempted creatures, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Well for us that we have a gracious God, who pitieth those that fear him, as a father pitieth his children,—who bears with our waywardness, our unbelief, and rebellion! Hence, while Satan desires to sift us as wheat, the intercession of our Divine Redeemer prevails, that our faith shall not utterly fail, though put to a severe trial.

Though the heart, by the violence of the tempest, may for a time be thrown out of its course, yet when the storm is hushed, and a favourable gale springs up, it again summons courage, and resumes its former direction. Though terrified by the noise and fury of the elements, the soul, as a frightened deer, may run in every direction, yet when it has had time to recover itself, it will fly—I had almost said instinctively—to its covert in the rock. When every other spring of joy is dried up, then it learns to value the never-failing source of comfort that religion yields. Then it can exclaim, with a vivacity and a feeling before unknown, as it rests upon the Almighty alone for support, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

While the melancholy spectacle serves strongly to remind us that nothing on earth can yield substantial bliss, the words of the psalmist contain a convincing proof that religion offers us support under every calamity. On both these truths we propose to offer some remarks, and then to add a few reflections on the use and intention of afflictions.

Nothing, we said, that earth affords can yield substantial bliss. On this topic it is easy to moralize. It forms the burden of the youthful writer's first essay, of the poet's song, and the philosopher's dream. But on

this subject, so readily granted and so seldom realized, *Death* reads us a lesson that comes right home to our bosoms. What now is become of the plans of future enjoyment, or honour, or wealth, which man had fondly formed? Where now is the friend on whom the affectionate heart had rested? Where is he who had long been the hope and pride of his family,—from whom his fond parents had expected to receive the last offices of filial affection?

The sudden removal in the prime of life of one of our friends, the lamentations of his relatives, forcibly bring to our thoughts that the joys of earth, even the most innocent and most endearing, are imperfect, unsatisfying, and transitory. They are imperfect;—they are never entirely unmingled with painful circumstances. Thus with friendship: either we are disappointed in the character of him in whom we placed full confidence, or if we find him to be indeed all that our heart could wish, we are called to see him suffer pain without the power to afford him any relief; or we are separated from him with short and distant intervals of reunion. But the pleasures of earth are not only imperfect; they are further unsatisfying. To confine ourselves to those of friendship, which are certainly among the purest: yet a friend, though he should be all that we can reasonably expect, is but a frail being like ourselves, and unable, therefore, to support the soul under all the calamities of life, or to fill up by his kind attentions the aching void of the human breast. By sharing, he may double our joys, and by dividing, may diminish our sorrows; he may in certain cases be the very idol of our affections, and yet we feel that something more is wanting to render us happy. Let our intimacy be ever so great, and our confidence unbounded, still, in the deep recesses of the soul, will be found a rankling care that we dare not reveal. But what stamps with vanity all the joys of time is, that they are transitory. Let our happiness, when founded on any earthly object, be as complete as we could desire, —let that object be supposed capable of filling the whole

capacity of the soul—still the day must speedily arrive in the rapid whirl of things, when the possession the most valued of all must be surrendered. And by that wonderful counterpoise of pleasure and pain which the Creator has ordained in all human events, by which all ranks are brought much nearer to a level than we sometimes imagine, the greater that our enjoyment has been, the more severe is our loss. The more our affections had entwined themselves around a beloved friend, the more violent the separation, leaving the heart bleeding at every pore.

But to make ample amends to man for the vanity of all sublunary joys, religion offers to his embrace a happiness complete, satisfactory, and enduring. Thus did the psalmist find it. In our text we are not presented with a moral axiom, cold and repulsive; not with a calm reflection upon the propriety of things, such as a man would make when he feels at his ease; nothing of all this: but it is the passionate cry of a soul deeply wounded—which, having looked around in vain to every other source of comfort, flies, as its last refuge, into the arms of Divine love, and there finds all its sorrows, all its losses, all its cares, swallowed up in rapturous hope of endless bliss. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." In the admiring view of infinite perfection and boundless mercy, all its wishes and desires are annihilated, save this one:—O, my God! permit me to call thee Father; let me constantly enjoy thy favour, and I care not what thou deprivest me of. Thou art the fountain of bliss; and while I may go with confidence to thee, to draw water from the wells of consolation, what care I though the rills be dried? Thy love is an unmeasurable ocean, from which I may to eternity quench the thirst after happiness, without any apprehension of exhausting the supply!

Such an exclamation, uttered in the midst of painful circumstances,—such complete reliance on the goodness and sufficiency of God,—more deeply affects us than a

long train of arguments addressed to the understanding. It speaks at once to the heart. It causes a ray of hope to spring up in the bosom of wo, that it may yet find the same consolation.

And why not? We are too apt to suppose that the experience of the saints, recorded in the Scriptures, and more particularly in the Psalms, has in it something peculiar, with which we have no concern. Far from it. They were men of like passions, subject to the same infirmities and temptations as we are. In one respect we are more highly favoured, as we enjoy a clearer revelation of the Divine will, a greater manifestation of the mercy of God, than any they were acquainted with. What hinders us, then, from enjoying the same consolations—from attaining the same eminent piety? It is the weakness of our faith, my friends. It is our distrust of the Divine goodness; our attachment to the world. This leads to observe upon the use and intention of afflictions. These are some of the most efficient means employed by Divine mercy for reclaiming erring mortals. They are intended to wean our hearts from the world, by convincing us feelingly of its vanity, that we may fly for refuge to the Deity. O, thou distressed soul! violently torn from the object of thy affections, to whom the world appears a waste—now, now is the time to cast thyself into the open arms of thy Redeemer and thy God! That opportunity which thou wouldst never have found, he has of his own accord presented to thee. Think not thou hast no right to come. He invites all that are weary and heavy laden, with the promise of giving them rest. Or if you have already tasted that the Lord is gracious, this affliction is to try your faith; if sound, it will abide the test, and come forth purified as gold that is tried by the fire.

Afflictions, when meekly submitted to, are a blessed means of drawing the soul closer to God. They enable us to look forward to the hour of death with greater composure, and afford a happy opportunity to prepare for that solemn event.

Sanctified afflictions are an eminent means to fit the soul for heaven. Nothing in nature is so contrary as the pleasures of earth and the joys of heaven. The more we covet the former, the more we forfeit the latter; and if there is any thing to be depended on in experience, it is this, that the man who should never see any trouble in life, will never see happiness after death. Thus, far from being a curse, they are a real blessing. They are as medicine to the soul,—bitter to the taste, but necessary for its well-being. They restore, under the care of the good physician, its faculties to greater soundness, and accordingly capacitate it for greater happiness.

That our loss seems greater than we can bear, is owing to our being more attached to an object than religion, which seeks only our happiness, allows. While all was well, we were not conscious of the strength of our attachment and the weakness of our faith. Now that we know it by painful experience, let us humbly implore forgiveness at the hands of God. Let us return to him that has smitten, and he will heal us. Let us not be satisfied till we can exclaim, with all the powers of our soul, with the afflicted psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none I desire upon earth besides thee."

ON DEATH.

BY HUGH BLAIR, D.D., F.R.S.

Death, like an ever rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten as a dream—
Dies at the opening day.

ECCLESIASTES xii. 5.—*Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.*

WHEN we observe the funerals that pass along the streets, or when we walk among the monuments of death, the first thing that naturally strikes us is the undistinguishing blow with which that common enemy levels all. We behold a great promiscuous multitude all carried to the same abode; all lodged in the same dark and silent mansions. There mingle persons of every age and character, of every rank and condition in life; the young and the old, the poor and the rich, the gay and the grave, the renowned and the ignoble. A few weeks ago, most of those whom we have seen carried to the grave, walked about as we do now on the earth; enjoyed their friends, beheld the light of the sun, and were forming designs for future days. Perhaps it is not long since they were engaged in scenes of high festivity. For them, perhaps, the cheerful company assembled; and in the midst of the circle they shone with gay and pleasing vivacity. But now—to them, all is finally closed. To them no more shall the seasons return, or the sun arise. No more shall they hear the voice of mirth, or behold the face of man. They are swept from the universe as though they had never been. *They are carried away as with a flood. The wind has passed over them and they are gone.*

When we contemplate this desolation of the human race; this final termination of so many hopes; this silence that now reigns among those who, a little while ago, were so busy, or so gay; who can avoid being touched

with sensations at once awful and tender? What heart but then warms with the glow of humanity? In whose eye does not the tear gather, on revolving the fate of passing and short-lived man? Such sensations are so congenial to human nature that they are attended with a certain kind of sorrowful pleasure. Even voluptuaries themselves sometimes indulge a taste for funereal melancholy. After the festive assembly is dismissed, they choose to walk retired in the shady grove, and to contemplate the venerable sepulchres of their ancestors. This melancholy pleasure arises from two different sentiments meeting at the same time in the breast; a sympathetic sense of the shortness and vanity of life, and a persuasion that something exists after death; sentiments which unite at the view of *the house appointed for all living*. A tomb, it has been justly said, is a monument situated on the confines of both worlds. It at once presents to us the termination of the inquietudes of life, and sets before us the image of eternal rest. *There*, in the elegant expressions of Job, *the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master.* It is very remarkable, that in all languages, and among all nations, death has been described in a style of this kind; expressed by figures of speech, which convey everywhere the same idea of rest, or sleep, or retreat from the evils of life. Such a style perfectly agrees with the general belief of the soul's immortality, but assuredly conveys no high idea of the boasted pleasures of the world. It shows how much all mankind have felt this life to be a scene of trouble and care; and have agreed in opinion, that perfect rest is to be expected only in the grave.

There, says Job, *are the small and the great.* There the poor man lays down at last the burden of his wearisome life. No more shall he groan under the load of poverty and toil. No more shall he hear the insolent calls

of the master from whom he received his scanty wages. No more shall he be raised from the needful slumber on his bed of straw, nor be hurried away from his homely meal to undergo the repeated labours of the day. While his humble grave is preparing, and a few poor and decayed neighbours are carrying him thither, it is good for us to think that this man too was our brother; that for him the aged and destitute wife, and the needy children now weep; that, neglected as he was by the world, he possessed, perhaps, both a sound understanding and a worthy heart, and is now carried by angels to rest in Abraham's bosom. At no great distance from him the grave is opened to receive the rich and proud man. For, as it is said with emphasis in the parable, *the rich man also died, and was buried.** He *also* died. His riches prevented not his sharing the same fate with the poor man; perhaps, through luxury they accelerated his doom. Then, indeed, *the mourners go about the streets;* and while, in all the pomp and magnificence of wo, his funeral is prepared, his heirs, in the mean time, impatient to examine his will, are looking on one another with jealous eyes, and already beginning to quarrel about the division of his substance. One day we see carried along the coffin of the smiling infant; the flower just nipped as it began to blossom in the parent's view: and the next day we behold the young man, or young woman, of blooming form and promising hopes, laid in an untimely grave. While the funeral is attended by a numerous, unconcerned company, who are discoursing to one another about the news of the day, or the ordinary affairs of life, let our thoughts rather follow to the house of mourning, and represent to themselves what is going on there. There we would see a disconsolate family, sitting in silent grief, thinking of the sad breach that is made in their little society; and, with tears in their eyes, looking to the chamber that is now left vacant, and to every memorial that pre-

* Luke xvi. 22.

sents itself of their departed friend. By such attention to the woes of others, the selfish hardness of our hearts will be gradually softened, and melted down into humanity.

Another day we follow to the grave one who, in old age, and after a long career of life, has in full maturity sunk at last into rest. As we are going along to the mansion of the dead, it is natural for us to think and to discourse of all the changes which such a person has seen during the course of his life. He has passed, it is likely, through varieties of fortune. He has experienced prosperity and adversity. He has seen families and kindreds rise and fall. He has seen peace and war succeeding in their turns; the face of his country undergoing many alterations; and the very city in which he dwelt rising, in a manner, new around him. After all he has beheld, his eyes are now closed for ever. He was becoming a stranger in the midst of a new succession of men. A race who knew him not had arisen to fill the earth. Thus passes the world away. Throughout all ranks and conditions, *one generation passeth, and another generation cometh;* and this great inn is by turns evacuated and replenished by troops of succeeding pilgrims. O vain and inconstant world! O fleeting and transient life! When will the sons of men learn to think of thee as they ought? When will they learn humanity from the afflictions of their brethren; or moderation and wisdom from the sense of their own fugitive state? But, now, to come nearer to ourselves, let us,

II. Consider the death of our friends. Want of reflection, or the long habits either of a very busy, or a very dissipated life, may have rendered men insensible to all such objects as I have now described. The stranger and the unknown fall utterly unnoticed at their side. Life proceeds with them in its usual train, without being affected by events in which they take no personal concern. But the dissolution of those ties which had long bound men together in intimate and familiar

union, gives a painful shock to every heart. When a family who, for years, have been living in comfort and peace, are suddenly shattered by some of their most beloved or respected members being torn from them; when the husband or the spouse are separated for ever from the companion who, amid every vicissitude of fortune, solaced their life; who had shared all their joys, and participated in all their sorrows; when the weeping parent is folding in his arms the dying child whom he tenderly loved; when he is giving his last blessing, receiving the last fond adieu, looking for the last time on that countenance, now wasting and faded, which he had once beheld with much delight; then is the time when the heart is made to drink all the bitterness of human wo. But I seek not to wound your feeling by dwelling on these sad descriptions. Let us rather turn our thoughts to the manner in which such events ought to be received and improved, since happen they must in the life of man.

Then, indeed, is the time to weep. Let not a false idea of fortitude, or mistaken conceptions of religious duty, be employed to restrain the bursting emotion. Let the heart seek its relief in the free effusion of just and natural sorrow. It is becoming in every one to show on such occasions that he feels as a man ought to feel. At the same time let moderation temper the grief of a good man and a Christian. He must not *sorrow like those who have no hope*. As high elation of spirits befits not the joys, so continued and overwhelming dejection suits not the griefs of this transitory world. Grief, when it goes beyond certain bounds, becomes unmanly; when it lasts beyond a certain time becomes unseasonable. Let him not reject the alleviation which time brings to all the wounds of the heart, but suffer excessive grief to subside by degrees into a tender and affectionate remembrance. Let him consider that it is in the power of Providence to raise him up other comforts in the place of those he has lost. Or, if his mind at present reject the thoughts of such consolation, let it turn for relief to the prospect of a future meeting in a

happier world. This is indeed the chief soother of affliction; the most powerful balm of the bleeding heart. It assists us to view death as no more than a temporary separation of friends. They whom we have loved still live, though not present to us. They are only removed into a different mansion in the house of the common Father. The toils of their pilgrimage are finished; and they are gone to the land of rest and peace. They are gone from this dark and troubled world, to join the great assembly of the just; and to dwell in the midst of everlasting light. In due time we hope to be associated with them in these blissful habitations. Until this season of reunion arrive, no principle of religion discourages our holding correspondence of affection with them by means of faith and hope.

Meanwhile, let us respect the virtues and cherish the memory of the deceased. Let their little failings be now forgotten. Let us dwell on what was amiable in their character, imitate their worth, and trace their steps. By this means the remembrance of those whom we loved shall become useful and improving to us, as well as sacred and dear; if we accustom ourselves to consider them as still speaking, and exhorting us to all that is good; if, in situations where our virtue is tried, we call up their respected idea to view, and, as placed in their presence, think of the part which we could act before them without a blush.

Moreover, let the remembrance of the friends whom we have lost strengthen our affection to those that remain. The narrower the circle becomes of those we love, let us draw the closer together. Let the heart that has been softened by sorrow mellow into gentleness and kindness, make liberal allowance for the weaknesses of others, and divest itself of the little prejudices that may have formerly prepossessed it against them. The greater havoc that death has made among our friends on earth, let us cultivate connexion more with God, and heaven, and virtue. Let those noble views which man's immortal character affords fill and exalt our minds,

Passengers only through this sublunary region, let our thoughts often ascend to that divine country, which we are taught to consider as the native seat of the soul. There we form connexions that are never broken. There we meet with friends who never die. Among celestial things there is firm and lasting constancy, while all that is on earth changes and passes away. Such are some of the fruits we should reap from the tender feelings excited by the death of friends. But they are not only our friends who die. Our enemies also must go to their *long home*. Let us, therefore,

III. Consider how we ought to be affected, when they from whom suspicions alienated, or rivalry has divided us—they with whom we have long contended, or by whom we imagine ourselves to have suffered wrong, are laid, or about to be laid, in the grave. How inconsiderable then appear those broils in which we had been long involved, those contests and feuds which we thought were to last for ever? The awful moment that now terminates them makes us feel their vanity. If there be a spark of humanity left in the breast, the remembrance of our common fate then awakens it. Is there a man, who, if he were admitted to stand by the deathbed of his bitterest enemy, and beheld him enduring that conflict which human nature must suffer at the last, would not be inclined to stretch forth the hand of friendship, to utter the voice of forgiveness, and to wish for perfect reconciliation with him before he left the world? Who is there that, when he beholds the remains of his adversary deposited in the dust, feels not, in that moment, some relentings at the remembrance of those past animosities which mutually imbittered their life?—"*There lies the man with whom I contended so long, silent and mute for ever. He is fallen; and I am about to follow him. How poor is the advantage which I now enjoy? Where are the fruits of all our contests? In a short time we shall be laid together; and no remembrance remain of either of us under the sun. How many mistakes may there have been between us? Had not he*

his virtues and good qualities as well as I? When we shall both appear before the judgment-seat of God, shall I be found innocent, and free of blame, for all the enmity I have borne to him?"—My friends, let the anticipation of such sentiments serve now to correct the inveteracy of prejudice, to cool the heat of anger, to allay the fierceness of resentment. How unnatural it is for animosities so lasting to possess the hearts of mortal men, that nothing can extinguish them but the cold hand of death! Is there not a sufficient proportion of evils in the short span of human life, that we seek to increase their number by rushing into unnecessary contests with one another? When a few suns more have rolled over our heads, friends and foes shall have retreated together; and their love and their hatred be equally buried. Let our few days then be spent in peace. While we are all journeying onwards to death, let us rather *bear one another's burdens*, than harass one another by the way. Let us smooth and cheer the road as much as we can, rather than fill the valley of our pilgrimage with the hateful monuments of our contention and strife.

Thus I have set before you some of those meditations which are naturally suggested by the prevalence of death around us; by the death of strangers, of friends, and of enemies. Because topics of this nature are obvious, let it not be thought that they are without use. They require to be recalled, repeated, and enforced. Moral and religious instruction derives its efficacy, not so much from what men are taught to know, as from what they are brought to feel. It is not the dormant knowledge of any truths, but the vivid impression of them, which has influence on practice. Neither let it be thought that such meditations are unseasonable intrusions upon those who are living in health, in affluence, and ease. There is no hazard of their making too deep or painful an impression. The gloom which they occasion is transient; and will soon, too soon, it is probable, be dispelled by the succeeding affairs and pleasures of the world. To wisdom it certainly belongs, that men should

be impressed with just views of their nature and their state; and the pleasures of life will always be enjoyed to most advantage when they are tempered with serious thought. There is *a time to mourn;* as well as *a time to rejoice.* There is a virtuous *sorrow, which is better than laughter.* There is a *sadness of the countenance, by which the heart is made better.*

HOPE IN GOD THE ONLY REFUGE IN DISTRESS.

BY JACOB DUCHE, A.M.

When overwhelmed with grief,
My heart within me dies,
Helpless, and far from all relief,
To Heaven I lift mine eyes.

PSALM xlii. 11.—*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

THE Psalm from whence my text is taken presents us with a lively picture of a true believer struggling under some violent assaults from the enemies of his peace. Whether the distress of David was occasioned by the persecution of Saul, or the straits to which he was reduced by the unnatural rebellion of his son Absalom; whether it proceeded from a deep sensibility of those remains of corruption which lurk in the most regenerate breasts; or from an apprehension that God had withdrawn "the light of his countenance" from his soul; in either of these cases, his affliction must have been acute indeed, and he might well break forth into this affecting strain of religious melancholy:—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Why dost thou suffer these out-

ward afflictions to bear down thy constancy, or these inward struggles to weaken thy faith? Hope thou in God!"—Hast thou not heretofore experienced, in innumerable instances, the wonders of his love? Hath not his arm supported thee in the greatest extremities? Hath not his countenance cheered thee in thy darkest moments?—Why, then, this strange dejection now? O where is all thy wonted heroism fled?—where that lively trust and confidence in thy God that has heretofore steeled thy breast against the arrows of adversity? "Is his arm shortened that it cannot save? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? And hath God forgotten to be gracious?" No, my soul!—already do I feel his animating presence: sure I am that "I shall yet praise him," for delivering me out of my present distresses: sure I am that the sweet influences of his blessed Spirit will yet sooth my deep disquietude, and give health and cheerfulness to my dejected countenance. Yea, sure I am that he is still "my God," my God by covenant, my guardian God, the God of my life, the God of my love!

Thus spake, thus triumphed, "the man after God's own heart!" Doubtless the conflict was severe and tedious; but faith was at length victorious. Noble encouragement this to every one that hath listed under the banners of Jesus Christ, and commenced his Christian warfare! Come, then, ye candidates for heaven! ye followers of the Lamb! ye strangers and pilgrims upon earth! that have already entered upon your journey through this valley of tears to the heavenly Canaan! Come, let us take a view together of the difficulties and dangers which we are taught to expect upon the road! Let us trace the sources of that uneasiness and disquietude to which the best of Christians are frequently exposed, and as we proceed, apply to them the noble prescription pointed out by the text: "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

The first, and I believe the principal sources of the

sincere Christian's heaviness and disquietude, are those remains of sin and corruption which stain the purest and most regenerate breasts. Under the first openings of grace, the first dawnings of divine light and love upon the soul, the change from death to life is frequently so great and transporting, that the young unpractised convert is lost in admiration. From the depths of his own misery and corruption he is raised to such stupendous prospects of redeeming love that, like the disciples on Mount Tabor, he is unwilling to leave the divine effulgence that surrounds him, to descend from the height of gospel comfort, and to encounter the innumerable obstacles that await his progress in the world below. But when once the fervours of this first love are abated; when once the young candidate is called forth to testify his affection for his Saviour by acts of obedience, patience, resignation, fortitude, under temporal as well as spiritual trials and calamities—then it is that the clouds begin to gather; the day of distress approaches; "his sins take such fast hold of him that he is not able to look up;" his secret corruptions start forth unexpectedly from every corner of his heart, and throw his whole soul into confusion. It is an attack for which he is unprepared, from a quarter which he little expected. Scarce is he able to recollect his past experience; or, if he does, it is not with a view to strengthen his faith, but to increase his melancholy. In the full bitterness of his soul he is ready to exclaim,

"O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me! when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness." Once I thought that I had gained a sure refuge in my Redeemer's arms; I hoped that my peace was made, that I was a child of God, and had received the earnest of the Spirit in my heart. But, alas! I now fear that this was but a pleasing dream; that Satan transformed himself into an angel of light to deceive my soul; that my conversion was a visionary thing, not a real change of my corrupted nature. If this be not the case,

whence is it that the sorrows of my heart are thus enlarged? If I am indeed a child of God, "Why go I thus heavily while the enemy oppresses me?" And yet I hate these corruptions, which I feel so sensibly; and my greatest distress and uneasiness is, that I do feel them. The desire of my soul is towards God; and there is nothing in the whole world but what I would cheerfully resign to be at peace with him. Yea, I can lay my hand upon my heart, and safely declare, that grievous as the transgressions are into which my corruptions have hurried me, yet I feel something within me that bids me hope, that the God whom I have offended is the God whom I love."

Such are the sad disquietudes which the latent remains of sin frequently awaken in the believer's breast! Many excellent Christians there are who go thus mourning and disconsolate to their graves; while a few, perhaps, after repeated conflicts and repeated victories, obtain at length that sweet assurance which enabled the apostle to declare, that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, should separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."

As for those who are still mourning, and refuse to be comforted,—who are continually expostulating with themselves in the plaintive language of my text, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" let us only ask them whether the frame of their minds is in any respect similar to that of holy David's? Doth thy soul, poor trembling Christian, "pant after thy God as the hart panteth after the water-brooks? Art thou athirst for God, even the living God?" Are the desires of thine heart all centered in Christ Jesus? Dost thou wish to know him more fully, to serve him more faithfully, to love him more ardently, to receive the sanctifying influences of his Spirit here, in order to be qualified to dwell in everlasting communion with him hereafter? Is this the real state of thy mind?

Take comfort then! "Hope thou in God; for thou shalt yet praise him, who is the health of thy countenance and thy God."

But are there no other sources of distress and disquietude to the sincere Christian than the latent corruptions of his own heart? Are not some of his severest trials occasioned by the afflictive dispensations of Divine Providence? Doubtless they are. For good and virtuous men are so far from being exempted from misfortunes and afflictions, that they are taught to expect a double portion:—"For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; and chasteneth every son that he receiveth." Under the immediate influence of these severe visitations, the "soul is indeed cast down and disquieted;" it can scarcely penetrate the gloom with which its sorrows encompass it, or discover the potent arm that struck the blow, and robbed it of its peace. Or if it should see the will of God in the infliction—how hard to resign!—to kiss the rod, and bless the correcting hand!

When dire disease spreads its fatal venom through the human frame, and robs us of the bloom of youth, and the joys of health—when prosperity withdraws her smile, and poverty, with her attendant woes, succeeds —when death snatches a bosom friend or dear relative from our embraces—how difficult to adopt the language of the good old priest! "It is the Lord's will; let him do what seemeth him good."

The recollection of former prosperity, and of all the spiritual and temporal blessings which an indulgent Heaven had with profusion showered on our heads, serves only to give additional weight to the present load of grief, and deepen the melancholy that clouds and oppresses the soul. The eye of sorrow is perpetually looking back, and lamenting the loss of objects in which the mistaken mind had fondly centered all its felicity. It rarely ventures to send forth one eager look into the region of hope. It deems it impossible to turn a present distress into a present blessing; and can never conceive

that darkness itself should be the very substance through which the light of Heaven must again be rendered visible to the benighted heart.

In the moment of Job's despondency under the severe trials with which he was visited, he would have reasoned and spoke far otherwise than he did, had it suited the purposes of Heaven to unveil at that moment the secret design of his present affliction. Had he discerned the angel that was "riding in the whirlwind,"—had he beheld "the hand that directed the storm,"—he would doubtless have changed the language of his exclamation:—O my soul! he would then have said, though thou art not "as in months past, as in the days when God preserved thee," yet have I a secret hope that thou wilt soon feel again his reviving presence, and praise him for greater blessings than thou hast heretofore received.

Indeed, my brethren, the most seemingly severe dispensations, if we could raise our thoughts for a few moments above the considerations of flesh and blood, would appear to be dispensations of mercy. Medicines, you know, are seldom sweet or palatable:—and yet, would you not thank your physician for administering them, when he knows they are necessary for the recovery of your health? And canst thou then, O Christian! repine, or be dissatisfied with thy Saviour, for mingling the bitter draught of affliction, when he foresees that thine everlasting salvation, perhaps, depends upon the remedy? Every thing that ties thee to the world keeps thee at a distance from Christ. Can thy Saviour more effectually testify his affection for thee than by breaking these cords, and thus lessening thine attachment to the world? Cease, therefore, to repine at thy loss! Be not cast down or disquieted! Thy God hath not forsaken thee: he is only preparing thee for better times—"Hope thou therefore in him, for thou shalt yet praise him, who is the health of thy countenance and thy God."

Lastly, The world in which he lives, and the men

with whom he is obliged to converse, administer new causes of sorrow and disquietude to the sincere Christian. The secret treachery of pretended friends, or the open malice of avowed enemies—the general disrespect and contempt with which virtue is treated, and the honours and encouragement which are given to vice—all conspire to wound his breast, and even to render him less pleased than he wishes to be with the society of his fellow-creatures. For who that has the least spark of zeal for the honour of his God can bear to hear his name blasphemed and his religion ridiculed? to see his precepts violated with impunity, and his ordinances neglected and despised? And yet, to oppose these prevailing enormities, to testify an abhorrence of them by private reproofs or public censures, is sometimes deemed rudeness and impertinence. Yea, such is the sad degeneracy of mankind, that if we would be truly religious, now-a-days, we must dare to be singular.

But be not thou discouraged, thou child of God! Though placed in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, thou hast reason to say, with David, "Wo is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar! —O that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I flee away, and be at rest!"—though integrity, uprightness, and the fear of God should be even banished from the abodes of men—though the church of God should be laid level with the dust, and the disciples of a crucified Jesus be ridiculed and reviled—yet fear thou not, neither be dismayed! God sits at the helm of the universe—Christ Jesus will take care of "his own:" and as for thyself, if, with Job, thou art determined "to hold fast thy righteousness, and not to let it go, nor suffer thine heart to reproach thee, so long as thou livest"—if thou hopest in God, and trustest in the Lord thy Saviour—if the righteousness of Christ is thy clothing, and faith in him thine impenetrable shield—"be thine outward circumstances in life what they will, believe me, thou art still under the defence of the Most High, and

safe under the shadow of his wings." The stormy wind may blow, the billows of adversity may rise and rage; but while thou hast fast hold of the Rock of Ages, thou canst no more be moved by their blackest, rudest efforts, than are the strong foundations of some stately edifice by the light breezes of a summer sky!

THE CERTAINTY AND HAPPINESS OF THE RESURRECTION.

BY THE REV. GEORGE B. MILLER, A.M.

When God is nigh, my faith is strong,
His arm is my Almighty prop:
Be glad my heart, rejoice my tongue,
My dying flesh shall rest in hope.

PSALM XVI. 9.—*My flesh also shall rest in hope.*

ONE of the peculiar excellences of the gospel is, that it has stripped death of its terrors and the grave of its gloom. The departure of the Christian is styled a sleep —his abode in the grave is called a rest. In the lively exercise of faith, he can sing with the poet,

"Death now no more I dread,
But cheerful close mine eyes;
Death is a sleep, the grave a bed;
With Jesus I shall rise."

Or with a Paul he may exclaim, in a tone of triumph,

"O death, where is thy sting!
O grave, where is thy victory!"

Or with David in the text, "Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope."

In further developing the instruction and comfort contained in these words, we shall consider—

First, The certainty of the believer's resurrection.

Secondly, The happy consequences of that glorious event.

And may Almighty God, the Father of mercies, give us all a personal interest in these truths, for Jesus' sake!

If David, under the darker dispensation of the old covenant, was enabled by the Spirit to express his confident expectation of a future resurrection, much more may every true disciple of Christ look forward with unwavering faith to that stupendous event, now that he hath appeared who hath "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel."

The certainty of the believer's resurrection is founded,

First, Upon the fact of the Saviour's rising from the tomb. This is the apostle's argument: "Now, if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Hence, we see how important a doctrine in the gospel scheme this is: how necessary an item in the articles of our faith.

Nothing less than the whole foundation of our hopes of heaven rests upon it. This depends therefore upon the fact of the Redeemer's resurrection. To enter into a full detail of the reasons upon which the certainty of this fact is grounded, would lead us too far from our present object. It is sufficient for us, as Christians, as believers in Divine revelation, to know from the word of God, that "Christ is risen, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

To this truth prophets and apostles bear witness. Christ himself had foretold his resurrection, and in confirmation of his word, after he left the tomb he showed himself "alive to his disciples by many infallible proofs." This was a subject to which the first preachers of the gospel not merely occasionally referred, but by which they introduced their message of peace to men; and like St. Paul, in the passage just quoted, rested the truth and authority of their mission upon it. To reject this

would be to reject the whole gospel—would be to impeach the authority of Christ and the veracity of God.

And, in the closest connexion with the resurrection of the head, is that of all the members. Christ Jesus lived and acted, died and rose again, as a public character—as the representative of his church.

Secondly. Says the apostle to the Romans: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." If the former argument proved the general truth that all believers shall rise in virtue of the resurrection of Christ, this proposition of Divine truth shows who they are that have ground to hope that they shall participate in that joyful event. It is they who have the Spirit of Christ. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." To such only the promise belongs. By this mark, therefore, we must try our hopes.

"The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Are these fruits produced in our hearts? are they visible in our lives? Then we may dwell with a cheerful hope upon the pleasing thought, that though this body is doomed to die because of sin, yet even in death "our flesh shall rest in hope." Death shall put a stop to sin and suffering, but not to our existence. Not only the soul, the immaterial part, is proof against the mortal shaft of the "king of terrors;" the flesh, too, the frail and feeble body, shall once escape his grasp. Death shall be robbed of his prey—the grave shall give up its trust. The bodies of the saints that now sleep in the dust shall be raised, never to die more.

The majesty of God, the honour of the Saviour, and the dignity of the Holy Spirit are involved in this point. The majesty of God and the glory of his name are involved, and that in so tender a manner, that our Lord severely upbraids the Sadducees, who denied the resur-

rection, for robbing God of his glory by their unworthy ideas of so great a Being.

For when he condescended to be called the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, he had given satisfactory assurance that these his servants were not dead; "for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And shall we, who profess to know and to honour him as our God, be guilty of holding the same degrading opinion respecting his majesty? Never for a moment let us suffer ourselves to doubt this grand, this cheering truth, that "the dead in Christ shall rise;" that "he that believeth, though he were dead, yet shall he live;" that the sons of God are immortal, because their Father is.

The immortality of the soul was a truth of which even the heathens were not entirely ignorant. The resurrection and consequent immortality of the body was hinted at under the ancient dispensation, but its full and clear development was reserved for times of gospel splendour.

Not only the majesty of God, but the honour of Christ, as Mediator, is deeply involved in this point. Without this final triumph over death and hell, his victory would have remained for ever incomplete. One great purpose of his death and resurrection would have remained unaccomplished. "Death, the last enemy," would have it to boast that he was invincible. But no. This boast is silenced. Victory is altogether on the side of our Captain. The powers of darkness are in chains; suffered to prolong their existence only during His pleasure, till the whole work of redemption shall be achieved, and the last name "written in the book of life." Then shall that saying be gloriously fulfilled, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

By his "one offering," Christ "hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." This is that full and final adoption for which believers still continue to groan while in this vale of tears, to wit, "the redemption of our body."

Let the stoic, in the pride of his heart, declare that he cares not what becomes of his mortal part; the Christian is actuated by kindlier feelings: he is concerned for the restoration of this companion of the soul, now degraded by sin; and he is sure that the times of restitution are approaching. That the honour of his Master and Head is interested; that once he shall be made like to his glorified body, for he shall see him as he is.

Further, the dignity of the Holy Spirit is concerned. Does he dwell personally in those that belong to Christ? Are Christians, by reason of this indwelling of the Spirit, the temples of God? It is the body that is the temple. Of this it is said, "If any man defile the temple, him shall God destroy." And shall this temple be consigned to final destruction, and nothing at last remain of the sanctified edifice but a mass of rubbish and a heap of corruption? No. Very different is the doctrine of the Bible on this subject. The Spirit will not forsake his abode; but though for a season it may lie in ruins, it shall be built again, a more glorious and perfect edifice than it was before.

The soul, it is true, is the first object of care to that Almighty agent. But the body also participates in his solicitude; it also shall have a share in the working of his mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

Thus have we seen, that if it is true that Christ is risen; if there is any dependence to be put upon the declarations of Scripture; if the majesty of God shall suffer no injury; if the honour of Christ, conferred upon him as Mediator, in consequence of his great undertaking, shall remain safe; if the dignity of the Holy Spirit shall be maintained;—then every sincere Christian has a right to say, with a David, "My flesh also shall rest in hope."

But a subject so intimately connected with the glory of Jehovah cannot possibly be one of secondary importance. It is evidently one in which God takes, if I may so express myself, a peculiar interest. This abun

dantly shows, that it must likewise possess a vast interest for those who are the immediate objects of this Divine solicitude. It may be questioned whether Christians are always as sensible as they ought to be to the powerful bearing upon their final and perfect happiness which this doctrine possesses. We are too apt, I think, to consider and speak of it as a thing comparatively of little weight; and no wonder, then, if we fail to draw the comfort and instruction which it is calculated to yield. That, by the blessing of God, we may see something of its importance to our future felicity, let us examine,

Secondly, the happy effects connected with the resurrection of believers, so far as means are afforded for such an examination from the word of God.

The Scriptures assure us that all the dead shall be raised, and those that remain alive at the coming of Christ shall be changed. But it is only to those that have believed on the Saviour that this will be a happy event.

While here, the body was little else than a source of temptation, of trials, and suffering. How often did it demand, and by its clamorous importunity for indulgence did it gain, those attentions which ought to have been directed to higher objects. Often, too, by its weakness or its sufferings, it weighed down the immortal spirit, and checked its aspirations, and interrupted its endeavours, and defeated its efforts to rise to heaven.

Many are the instances where the soul is wrapped in gloom and despondence, through the oppressive weight of its feeble companion. In the ordination of Providence the mind can operate, in its present state, only through the medium of the bodily organs. Hence, it partakes in the most sensible manner in the infirmities to which they are liable. We need not remind you of the decay of the mental faculties, which to all appearance takes place when the bodily powers are enfeebled by age or disease.

We have, in fact, no evidence that the soul can operate without the aid of some instruments analogous to

the organs of the body. There is a remarkable passage in the Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, which goes far to show, that immediately upon their decease, believers shall be invested with something which, though by no means a body of flesh and blood, will supply its place in a far superior degree. The words are as follows:—"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

Here the apostle plainly expresses such an analogy as we have supposed, when he calls this mortal body a tabernacle, the other a house. Both answer the same purpose, only the latter is vastly more substantial and excellent. That he does not allude in this place to the resurrection is evident, because this clothing upon with a house from heaven is what he expected to take place immediately after death; else we should meanwhile, as he expresses it, "be found naked." Further, he speaks of this heavenly house as already prepared for its future tenant, which could not easily be said of the body that is to slumber its allotted period in the ground.

We have dwelt the longer upon this point, though not immediately connected with our present subject, because it is one that is seldom adverted to in public discourses, although it furnishes an interesting topic for pious contemplation. We return to the question on hand.

This frail, and often troublesome tenement of clay, shall therefore be built again in freshness, vigour, and beauty—in utility and excellence far surpassing its original conformation, yet so as to be essentially the same body that is committed to the dust. The surprising changes that shall be wrought by the power of God are

described by the inspired apostle when he thus speaks: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." From all this we gather, that the bodies of the saints at the resurrection will be every way fitted to be the eternal companions of their glorified spirits,—fitted to yield an increase of happiness, beyond all they had before experienced. That these assertions are not too large will appear when we call to your recollection a variety of expressions of strong import, in which there is an undeniable reference made to the resurrection.

It is styled by St. Paul, in a passage already alluded to, "the manifestation of the sons of God."

He calls it "the adoption for which we wait, to wit, the redemption of the body."

St. Peter speaks of "the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken of by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," which is to take place when Christ returns the second time.

To the same effect are the words of St. John: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He (Christ) shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

But no one can deny that Christ still wears (though in a form infinitely more glorious than while he was on earth) the same body which was laid in the tomb; which rested in hope, and which was raised again by the power of God; which he showed to his astonished disciples; which retained the prints of the nails and the wound in his side.

Let us fix our attention for a few moments upon these declarations of sacred writ, respecting the resurrection of the faithful.

It is termed, "the manifestation of the sons of God," the adoption, the redemption of the body, the redemption of the purchased possession."

Of Christ we read, that "He was declared to be the Son of God, with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Even so it shall be with his followers.

Now, already, they are known and acknowledged of God as his dear children. But their chief glory is still hidden in eternity, concealed from the view of the world. "Our life," says the apostle, "is hid with Christ in God;" but "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear," viz. at his second coming, "then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Then shall all his people be openly acknowledged of God, and presented to the astonished gaze of assembled worlds, clothed in robes of resplendent brightness. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars, for ever and ever."

For this glorious event, the apostle assures us, the whole creation waits in earnest expectation; "for we know," says he, "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

Such is the virulent nature of sin, that it has introduced ruin and degradation, devastation and havoc, among the workmanship of God. We know not the full extent of the evil: we witness its effects only partially; yet we see enough to fill the soul with horror at the sight of all the wretchedness that it has occasioned. The spoiler is gone forth; but it is only for an appointed season: the times of restitution are approaching. We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. He that sitteth upon the throne hath said, "Behold, I make all things new." Then shall "the tabernacle of God be with men; and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; but the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have *their* part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." In that New Jerusalem there "shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads, and they shall reign for ever and ever." For says the apostle John, "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." If the countenance of Moses, after being on the mount with God, and beholding a small portion of his glory, such as mortal sight could endure, became glistening, so that the children of Israel durst not behold him, and he was compelled to put a veil over his face, what must be the effect of that glorious vision of Jehovah Jesus, face to face, to which all his followers shall then be admitted?

What the apostle declares concerning the spiritual likeness wrought in the hearts of believers unto their glorious Head, will then be verified in regard to their renovated bodies. "For we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Such are the incomprehensibly glorious prospects to which the word of God calls the attention of every believing soul. Such will be the astonishing termination of the present scene, when the mystery of God is finished, and the mediatorial office of the Redeemer fully accomplished, and the time of the end shall come.

This ought to be the subject of our daily meditations, prayers, and earnest exertions, "that we be found worthy to stand before him on that day, looking for and hastening" unto it, as the apostle speaks. This was the subject of St. Paul's prayers for his beloved Ephesians, when he desires "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto them the

spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, to know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe; according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right-hand in the heavenly places."

Here is comfort—here is instruction. But in order to obtain the present benefit of these "exceeding great and precious promises," by which we shall "be made partakers of the divine nature," we must dwell upon them, we must keep them in remembrance.

What occasion so proper to think of these things as when the chastening hand of God is laid upon us, and our earthly comforts are fled, and we are called to realize the brevity, the vanity of this life, in mourning over a departed friend?

Then let us turn the eye of faith towards that scene where change, and loss, and death are unknown: then, by the aid of God's holy word, and the assistance of his gracious Spirit, let us contemplate the glorious inheritance of the saints, until our stricken hearts are kindled into a warmer affection to that gracious Deliverer to whom we owe our rescue and our hopes; till the earnest desire is excited "to be with Christ, which is far better."

What so well calculated to assuage the violence of our grief, as the certain assurance that this mourning and weeping shall soon be turned to joy? That the ashes which are committed to the ground "shall rest in hope?"—that death shall die, and free "grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," in every believer?

But there is likewise much instruction to be derived from the subject that has been considered. However, that we may not trespass too much upon your time, we shall barely hint at some particulars.

First. We learn, that if God hath shown such solici

tude for the body; if "Christ is the Saviour of the body" no less than of the soul; if the Holy Spirit condescends to make it his temple; then ought we to show a proper regard for it: and neither on the one hand dishonour it by unholy actions, nor on the other deprive it of the necessary attention which it requires.

Secondly. We learn, that to ensure to our bodies a blissful resurrection and the highest perfection, our first and chief care must be directed to the soul, for whose accommodation it is destined.

It is only by following after holiness of heart that we can ensure to these earthen vessels an entire and eternal cessation from pain.

Thirdly. We learn how complete and glorious, taking in the whole man, body and soul, and ensuring the utmost perfection of every part, is that salvation which Christ has wrought out for us.

Let us, then, with humble gratitude renew our covenant with him; or if hitherto we have neglected this privilege and duty, let us lose no time to flee to him who still calls unto every one that is athirst to come and drink the waters of life. Let this great question henceforth occupy the chief place in our hearts, How we may obtain a share in that inheritance which the Saviour has purchased? This point secured, we shall be able to meet death with a smile, and to adopt the language of the inspired psalmist, "My flesh also shall rest in hope."

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MORTAL AND A GLORIFIED BODY.

BY THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

"My flesh shall slumber in the ground,
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound;
Then burst the chains with sweet surprise,
And in my Saviour's image rise."

1 Cor. xv. 35.—*But some will say how are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?*

II. I now proceed to the second thing proposed, which was to describe the difference the Scripture makes between the qualities of a mortal and a glorified body.

The change which shall be made in our bodies at the resurrection, according to the Scripture account, will consist chiefly in these four things: 1. That our bodies shall be raised immortal and incorruptible. 2. That they shall be raised in glory. 3. That they shall be raised in power. 4. That they shall be raised spiritual bodies.

1. The body that we shall have at the resurrection shall be immortal and incorruptible: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Now these words *immortal* and *incorruption* not only signify that we shall die no more,—for in that sense the damned are immortal and incorruptible,—but that we shall be perfectly free from all the bodily evils which sin brought into the world: that our bodies shall not be subject to sickness, or pain, or any other inconveniences we are daily exposed to. This the Scripture calls "the redemption of our bodies;" the freeing them from all their maladies. Were we to receive them again subject to all the frailties and miseries which we are forced to wrestle with, I much doubt whether a wise man, were he left to his choice, would willingly take his again; whether he

would not choose to let his still lie rotting in the grave, rather than to be again chained to such a cumbersome clod of earth. Such a resurrection would be, as a wise heathen calls it, "a resurrection to another sleep." It would look more like a redemption to death again than a resurrection to life.

The best thing we can say of this house of earth is, that it is a ruinous building, and will not be long before it tumbles into dust—that it is not our home; we look for another house, eternal in the heavens. That we shall not always be confined here, but that in a little time we shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, from this burden of flesh, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. What frail things these bodies of ours are! How soon are they disordered! To what a troop of diseases, pains, and other infirmities are they constantly subject! And how does the least distemper disturb our minds, and make life itself a burden! Of how many parts do our bodies consist! And if one of these be disordered, the whole man suffers. If but one of these slender threads, whereof our flesh is made up, be stretched beyond its due proportion, or fretted by any sharp humour, or broken, what torments does it not create! Nay, when our bodies are at best, what pains do we take to answer their necessities, to provide for their sustenance, to preserve them in health, and to keep them tenantable, in some tolerable fitness for our soul's use! And what time we can spare from our labour is taken up in rest, and refreshing our jaded bodies, and fitting them for work again. How are we forced, even naturally, into the confines of death, even to cease to be:—at least, to pass so many hours without any useful or reasonable thoughts, merely to keep them in repose! But our hope and comfort are, that we shall shortly be delivered from this burden of flesh. When "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Oh! when shall we

arrive at that happy land where no complaints were ever heard—where we shall all enjoy uninterrupted health, both of body and mind, and never more be exposed to any of those inconveniences that disturb our present pilgrimage! When we shall have once passed from death unto life, we shall be eased of all the troublesome care of our bodies, which now takes up so much of our time and thoughts; we shall be set free from all those mean and tiresome labours which we must now undergo to support our lives. Yon robes of light, with which we shall be clothed at the resurrection of the just, will not stand in need of those careful provisions which it is so troublesome to us here either to procure, or to be without. But then, as our Lord tells us, "those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more, but they are equal to the angels." Their bodies are neither subject to disease, nor want that daily sustenance which these mortal bodies cannot be without. "Meats for the belly and the belly for meats; but God will destroy both it and them." This is that perfect happiness which all good men shall enjoy in the other world; a mind free from all trouble and guilt, in a body free from all pain and diseases. Thus our mortal bodies shall be raised immortal: they shall not only be always preserved from death (for so these might be, if God pleased), but the nature of them shall be wholly changed, so that they shall not retain seeds of mortality: they cannot die any more.

2. Our bodies shall be raised in glory. "Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." A resemblance of this we have in the lustre of Moses' face, when he had conversed with God on the mount: his face shone so bright that the children of Israel were afraid to come near him till he threw a veil over it; and that extraordinary majesty of Stephen's face seemed to be an earnest of his glory. "All that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." How, then,

if it shone so gloriously, even on earth, will it shine in the other world, where his, and the bodies of all the saints, are made like unto Christ's glorious body! How glorious the body of Christ is, we may guess from his transfiguration. St. Peter, when he saw this,—when our Lord's face shone as the sun, and his raiment became shining and white as snow,—was so transported with joy and admiration that he knew not what he said. When our Saviour discovered but a little of that glory which he now possesses, and which in due time he will impart to his followers, yet that little of it made the place seem a paradise; and the disciples thought that they could wish for nothing better than always to live in such pure light, and enjoy so beautiful a sight. "It is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles." Here let us fix our abode for ever. And if they thought it so happy only to be present with such heavenly bodies, and to behold them with their eyes, how much happier must it be to dwell in such glorious mansions, and to be themselves clothed with so much brightness!

This excellence of our heavenly bodies will probably arise in a great measure from the happiness of our souls. The unspeakable joy that we then shall feel will break through our bodies and shine forth in our countenances. As the joy of the soul, even in this life, has some influence upon the countenance, by rendering it more open and cheerful, so Solomon tells us, "A man's wisdom makes his face to shine." Virtue, as it refines a man's heart, so it makes his very looks more cheerful and lively.

3. Our bodies shall be raised in power. This expresses the sprightliness of our heavenly bodies, the nimbleness of their motion, by which they shall be obedient and able instruments of the soul. In this state, our bodies are no better than clogs and fetters, which confine and restrain the freedom of the soul. The corruptible body presses down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weighs down the mind. Our dull, sluggish, inactive bodies are often unable or backward to obey

the commands of the soul. But in the other life, "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint:" or, as another expresses it, "they shall run to and fro like sparks among the stubble." The speed of their motion shall be like that of devouring fire in stubble, and the height of it above the towering of an eagle; for they shall meet the Lord in the air when he comes to judgment, and mount up with him into the highest heaven. This earthly body is slow and heavy in all its motions, listless, and soon tired with action. But our heavenly bodies shall be as fire—as active and as nimble as our thoughts are.

4. Our bodies shall be raised spiritual bodies. Our spirits are now forced to serve our bodies, and to attend their leisure; and do greatly depend upon them for most of their actions. But our bodies shall then wholly serve our spirits, and minister to them, and depend upon them. So that, as by a natural body we understand one fitted for this lower, sensible world,—for this earthly state,—so a spiritual body is one that is suited to a spiritual state, to an invisible world, to the life of angels. And, indeed, this is the principal difference between a mortal and a glorified body. This flesh is the most dangerous enemy we have; we therefore deny and renounce it in our baptism. It constantly tempts us to evil; every sense is a snare to us; all its lusts and appetites are inordinate; it is ungovernable, and often rebels against reason; the law in our members wars against the law of our minds. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak; so that the best of men are forced to keep it under, and use it hardly, lest it should betray them into folly and misery. And how does it hinder us in all our devotions! How soon does it jade our minds when employed on holy things! How easily, by its enchanting pleasures, does it divert them from those noble exercises! But when we have obtained the resurrection unto life, our bodies will be spiritualized, purified, and

refined from their earthly grossness: then they will be fit instruments for the soul in all its divine and heavenly employment: we shall not be weary of singing praises to God through infinite ages.

Thus, after what little we have been able to conceive of it, it sufficiently appears that a glorified body is infinitely more excellent and desirable than this vile body. The only thing that remains is,

III. To draw some inferences from the whole. 1. From hence we may see how to account for the different degrees of glory in the heavenly world: for although all the children of God shall have glorious bodies, yet the glory of them all shall not be equal,—"as one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." They shall all shine as stars, but those who, by a constant diligence in well-doing, have attained to a higher measure of purity than others, shall shine more bright than others;—they shall appear as more glorious stars. It is certain that the most heavenly bodies will be given to the most heavenly souls; so that this is no little encouragement to us to make the greatest progress we possibly can in the knowledge and love of God, since the more we are weaned from the things of the earth now, the more glorious will our bodies be at the resurrection.

2. Let this consideration engage us patiently to bear whatever troubles we may be exercised with in the present life. The time of our eternal redemption draweth nigh. Let us hold out a little longer, and all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and we shall never sigh nor sorrow more. And how soon shall we forget all we endured in this earthly tabernacle, when once we are clothed with that house which is from above! We are now but on our journey towards home, and so must expect to struggle with many difficulties; but it will not be long ere we come to our journey's end, and that will make amends for all. We shall then be in a quiet and safe harbour, out of the reach of all storms and dangers; we shall then be at home in our Father's house, no

longer exposed to the inconveniences which, so long as we abide abroad in these tents, we are subject to. And let us not forfeit all this happiness for want of a little more patience. Only let us hold out to the end, and we shall receive an abundant recompense for all the trouble and uneasiness of our passage, which shall be endless rest and peace.

Let this especially fortify us against the fear of death: it is now disarmed, and can do us no hurt. It divides us indeed from this body awhile, but it is only that we may receive it again more glorious. As God therefore said once to Jacob, "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will go down with thee, and will surely bring thee up again;" so I may say to all who are born of God, Fear not to go down into the grave; lay down your heads in the dust; for God will certainly bring you up again, and that in a much more glorious manner. Only "be ye steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," and then let death prevail over, and pull down, this house of clay; since God hath undertaken to rear it up again, infinitely more beautiful, strong, and useful.

THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY OVER DEATH AND THE GRAVE.

BY THE REV. MR. PALMER.

Heaven opens on my eyes; my ears
With sounds seraphic ring.
Lend, lend your wings,—I mount, I fly—
O grave, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?

1 Cor. xv. 55.—*O death, where is thy sting?—O grave, where is thy victory?*

Let us mark *the feeling of mind* that is implied in this text. But who can fully describe what were the apostle's feelings when he uttered this language,—"O death, where is thy sting?" It is certainly expressive of holy composure, vigorous faith, and lively gratitude.

It is expressive, 1st, of *holy composure*.—"O death, where is thy sting?" The apostle Paul had been "in deaths oft;" he had seen the king of terrors advance, raise his arm, and level his dart, when Mercy interposed. And yet he expresses no fear, but says—"O death, where is thy sting?" How can we account for this composure? We have frequently seen the hero tremble when he turns his eye to the valley of the shadow of death, and the man who has slain his thousands has faltered when his own dissolution was in prospect; but here is one who is so meek that he will not revenge an insult, yet he is triumphing in the prospect of death. How is this? is it the result of ignorance? is it the result of presumption?—no; it is the result of faith and of knowledge, a right apprehension of the character and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ: it was this that enabled the apostle to speak of death in such terms with so much composure of mind,—"I am now ready to depart," "I am now willing to be offered," and "I would rather depart and be with Christ, which is far better." "The time of my departure is at hand."

He speaks of it as a departure, as a change of residence from one place to another: this was the result of faith; hence, we observe—

2d. That this expresses *vigorous faith*,—"O death, where is thy sting?—O grave, where is thy victory?" It is a vigorous faith, but it is a faith that is founded on the doctrines of the gospel; faith in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour. Now, Christian, just observe what is the foundation of the apostle's faith: he tells us in the commencement of this chapter—"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Mind the basis of his faith; it was not on any special revelation which he himself had received, but "according to the Scriptures," which are fulfilled in the person and love of Christ. Again, "that he was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." The cross of the Saviour was the foundation of the apostle's hope, the source whence all his consolation flowed, the grand incentive of his holy and devoted and zealous life, by which his converted soul was distinguished. These were the doctrines which he believed, and these doctrines were founded on the testimony of the Scriptures, and according to his faith so was his joy.—"O death, where is thy sting?" Now observe, Christian, there was nothing at all in the faith of the apostle that was remarkable but its vigorous exercise: it was like the faith of every Christian, nothing remarkable in it but its exercise; it is founded on the same basis—the Scriptures; it centres in the same object—the Saviour; it anticipates the same glory—heaven: there is no difference, then, between the faith of Paul and the faith of the humblest believer in the word of God, as it respects the nature of it; and how is it, my friends, that we do not have the same vigorous faith?—not because the promises of God are less comprehensive now than they were then,—not because the sacrifice of Christ has lost aught of its virtue in the space of eighteen hundred years. Why is it?—

because of unbelief. Sin robs the Christian of half his comfort: we have the same foundation for our faith, the same object, the same warrant, which Paul had; and this vigorous exercise of faith, though it is not essential to our salvation (for the feeblest saint shall win—"Christ will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax"), yet it is very important to our comfort while we are sojourners in this vale of tears.

3d. The text expresses *lively gratitude.*—"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, this is ascribing praise where praise is due; he does not ascribe his victory to the works of his own hands—he had renounced all confidence in the flesh long ere this; he does not ascribe his victory to the tears of penitence—though Paul never spoke lightly of these tears, which God beholds with approbation, and which caused joy among the angels of heaven,—but he is satisfied of this—that repentance can make no atonement for guilt; he is satisfied of this—that any performance, even his best, would fall far below what God does require, and has a right to require. Under a conviction, therefore, of his own imperfections and guilt, he flies to Christ; he rests on the righteousness of Christ; he rejoices in him alone, having no confidence in the flesh; and hence, when he speaks of victory, he ascribes the glory to Christ—"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." This, I say, is giving praise where it ought to be; and, my friends, under the influence of the same Spirit, we shall be as willing as Paul to ascribe all the glory to God.—"Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be all the glory."

But do you observe the connexion in which the text stands? Paul was not satisfied with expressing gratitude with his lips, but he goes one step forward. After speaking of victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, and giving thanks, he concludes—"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as

ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

The *triumph* anticipated. I say anticipated, because it is not fully realized even by the believer at the hour of death. Paul here gives us an illustration of his own definition of faith: he says—"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Now, here he illustrates it. So strong is his faith, that he speaks of that which is to come as if it were already present. Such is the faith of this character, that it makes him in the enjoyment realize that which is yet to come; for observe, Paul is speaking of the resurrection of the dead, looking forward to that period when the voice of the Son of God shall be heard through all the mansions of the dead, and when that voice shall be felt in all its quickening power; he beholds the earth with tremendous throes giving up her dead, and the sea giving up its dead, and he says, in the anticipation—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The triumph therefore here anticipated is complete, and must be perpetual: it is *complete*. It is not so at the hour of death; the *soul* of the believer shall at that moment be made perfect; his soul shall at that moment enter into the presence of the Lord; his soul shall then be glorified and happy: but the *body* must be consigned to the tomb; there the sting of death is felt; there the poison of death must rankle through all the veins, till it turns the whole into one mass of corruption. We must say to the worm—"Thou art our sister and brother; and to corruption, thou art our father." "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

But the happy spirit, dislodged from its clay tabernacle, shall triumph; triumph in the presence of God, in felicity undisturbed, till the morning of the resurrection, which shall again reunite the body and the soul; then death itself shall die. Now, this is the sentiment which Paul conveys in the text; looking forward to this resurrection, this complete victory. Death still reigns,

death still has its millions of captives; no bound, and no power on earth or in heaven can release them till the morning of the resurrection; but then he must let go his hold, then he must give up his power. Mark the reasoning of the apostle,—"Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then" (and not till then) "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

How complete then is the triumph that is anticipated; the period when body and soul shall be again united, when the body itself shall be made immortal, to dwell for ever with its companion in the presence of God and the Lamb.

And this triumph will be *perpetual.* No more death then; the bands of death will be dissolved for ever; the reign of death will cease; the body and soul of the believer will be conformed to the glorified image of his Saviour, to dwell for ever with the Lord,—for "he shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." They will have no more fear of death; they will be no more under the influence of its bondage; those that are admitted into the temple of God above shall go no more out for ever, but remain as pillars there. "I am the resurrection and the life," said the Saviour; "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die;" and, "because I live, ye shall live also."

I infer from this subject, first, that life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel. And there is

no confirmation of this doctrine so peculiarly interesting to the mind of man; no real confirmation of this doctrine, independent of the testimony of God and of the sacred Scriptures. Philosophers may reason on the constitution of the human soul, and they may infer its immortality; and it is pleasing to see the inferences of reason so conformable to the testimony of the sacred Scriptures; yet there is no satisfying proof but from the word of God. He who created the soul has expressed what is his will concerning it. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ "life and immortality are brought to light." There is something striking in that expression,—the bringing of life and immortality to light by the gospel. The fact supposed was revealed under the Old Testament; it was therefore a matter of faith to the Old Testament saints: but what under the Old Testament was matter of faith, under the New Testament is matter of fact; for Jesus Christ has actually risen from the dead, and entered into heaven as "the first begotten, and prince of the kings of the earth." He is raised from the dead; and therefore when we reason of life and immortality being brought to light under the gospel, we do not say what God Almighty can do, but we say what God Almighty has done;—"Life and immortality *are* brought to light by the gospel."

Secondly, How indebted are we to the mercy of God in giving us this gospel; this word, to be a light to our feet and a lamp unto our paths; this word, to console and support us amid all the changing scenes of life, that affords prospects so delightful when all the scenes of time shall be withdrawn. Let us remember our obligation to improve it, and not only to improve it to our own advantage, but anxious that others may be made partakers of like precious faith with ourselves.

Thirdly, Nothing but a life of faith on the Lord Jesus Christ can render the prospect of death delightful and easy. Remember Paul said—"For me to die is gain," but it stands in connexion with this language—

"For me to live is Christ;" and it is only as we are living by faith upon the Saviour that we can anticipate death with any degree of satisfaction, with any thing like composure of mind. Christian, perhaps you occasionally know what it is to be held in bondage through the fear of death; but what is the cause? Is it not because your faith is weak?—the nearer you keep to Christ, the more comfortable you are; let that basis be removed, and all is uncertain. I remember hearing an anecdote of a celebrated deist, whose mother had been accustomed once to read the Scriptures with pleasure, and derived some comfort from them; but her son persuaded her that they were a cunningly devised fable, and at the hour of death how great was her distress! "My son," says she, "has robbed me of my consolation and support by taking away the Bible; but, with all his philosophy, he has not been able to substitute any thing else." Faith in the Lord Jesus is the only certain antidote against death. It is worthy of your observation that many other systems have been tried, and under all systems some have repented, or perhaps have died under the influence of apathy and delusion; but there is no single instance of any one individual dying in the faith of Christ, and saying, in his expiring moments, "I have trusted the Saviour, and built on this rock, and it has deceived me." "I know," said Paul, "whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

My friends, let me affectionately recommend this Saviour to you; he is worthy of your unbounded confidence, for he never deceived you, nor can he deceive you. He is worthy of your warmest affection, for he combines in his sacred person every moral excellence that can render him worthy of the regard of an intelligent being; and he has laid you under infinite obligations to love him, and to devote yourselves to him. May we at the last day, yea, may we in the hour of death, be found among the number of those who, resting on Christ, are enabled to triumph in the prospect of eternity.

ON A FUTURE STATE.

BY THE LATE EDWARD HARWOOD, D.D.

Lord, tune our hearts to praise and love,
Our feeble notes inspire,
Till in thy blissful courts above
We join the angelic choir.

1 Thess. iv. 14.—*I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are asleep, that you sorrow not even as others who have no hope.*

The gospel was intended to disperse all gloom from the human heart, and from human life. The religion of Jesus opens to the mourner, not the *blackness of darkness* and the friendless shades of despair, but the cheerfulness of hope and the joyful prospect of immortality. The gospel of Jesus carries the believer's view beyond the present limited scene of things—draws aside the veil that *once* intervened between time and eternity, and gives the mourner, in this world, such a glorious, triumphant, boundless view of the regions of immortality, as cannot but make him ashamed of indulging an immoderate sorrow for any earthly creature, how near and dear soever, when he shall so soon meet it in those blest abodes, and part no more. The Thessalonians, to whom St. Paul writes, had lost some of their Christian friends by death. The mourners, it seems, wrote to the apostle, and, which is the first dictate of the heart upon such distressing occasions, when the mind is overwhelmed in grief and sorrow, desired the apostle to suggest some arguments to console them in this afflictive dispensation. What does the blessed apostle write in answer to this? He delivers those words to them, which he repeats to us, and to all future ages, for their and our comfort and consolation in these mournful scenes:—*I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you sorrow not as others who have no hope:*

for, he adds, *if we*, Christians, *believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them, also*, WHO SLEEP *in Jesus will God bring with him.* Your deceased friends, who have fallen asleep in Jesus, and died in the belief, and principles, and hopes of his religion, are not lost; their sleeping dust, which you drench with your tears, will one day be inspired with new life—be collected to form a *spiritual body*—and be presented along with you in the presence of God with exceeding great and mutual joy to each other. Christians who live and die in the full assurance of the evangelical doctrine of a glorious resurrection to eternal life, are not to *sorrow as those who have no hope*—are not to brood over a cheerless, despairing, melancholy prospect. This is both being ungrateful to God and unjust to their religion. The grand doctrine of their religion is a glorious and happy immortality. This is the distinguishing glory of the Christian religion—the great first fundamental truth it was propagated in this world to teach—the grand capital principle with which it was designed to inspire its professors. That Christian, therefore, who does not suffer this great and transporting TRUTH to take the full possession of his soul, and to shed all that powerful influence upon his conduct and heart it was intended to have, is still to learn what it is to be a Christian—hath not yet felt the native power, and force, and efficacy of the gospel's motives, and the gospel's first and primary design.

The gospel does not offer men, if they obey its rules, riches, and honours, and happiness in this world. Its rewards are all future. *Thou shalt be rewarded*, says our Lord. How and when rewarded?—rewarded with a uniform flow of tranquillity and peace, and domestic ease and happiness, in *this* world; rewarded with every thing that is vulgarly pronounced the summit of human felicity—long life, health, and prosperity? With none of these things in this world as the recompense, reader, of thy obedience; the Christian crown was never designed to be worn in this world—*thou shalt be rewarded*

at the resurrection of the just. Oh! what a powerful argument is this glorious topic which the Christian religion reveals and enforces, to moderate the greatest sorrows we can be called to suffer in this world, and to calm and compose into tranquillity, and placid resignation to a good God, the most distressed and melancholy bosom! Our deceased children and parents, friends and relations, are not lost to God and to immortality. It was not our friend we committed to the grave—we only consigned some frail and perishing appendages of his nature—our *friend* could not die—for the immaterial and immortal part was properly our friend—was properly what we loved and delighted in, and hope one day to meet and embrace in a happier world. We Christians close our eyes upon this world; but we close them in hope. Only *that which is imperfect*, as the apostle speaks, *is done away*. The soul perishes not at death—doth not suffer one common extinction with our ashes; it will live to God, to Jesus, and to happiness. The farewell we bid to life is not an eternal and everlasting adieu: we part with a temporary existence only to resume an eternal one. In this momentary state we are only in the infancy of our being, our knowledge, and our happiness. The scheme of Divine Providence towards us rational and immortal creatures is a vastly glorious and immensely grand and extensive one. The date of this most magnificent period commences in this world, but it reaches through a boundless duration. It is but a small, a very inconsiderable point of this most glorious plan which we in this world behold—when millions and millions of centuries and ages shall have rolled away, we shall be better judges of the greatness and grandeur of this incomprehensibly glorious *scheme*, which the Divine Goodness from eternal ages contrived for the improvement and felicity of us his children. How indecent, then, how incongruous, how ungrateful, is inconsolable grief and disconsolate sorrow on a temporary loss, which we shall shortly regain with such infinite advantage!—regain! oh, how improved! oh, how ineffably blessed!

—and instead of congratulating them and ourselves that they are most mercifully dismissed from this ensnaring world, before they were corrupted with its vices—instead of joyful gratulations that they have exchanged death for life, mortality for immortality, time for eternity, trouble and distress for peace and tranquillity, disease and pain for immortal health, and ease, and joy; instead of pronouncing them happy, almost envying their happiness for having escaped the pollutions of this world, been strangers to its variety of misery and wretchedness; and in the youth and morning of life by a soft and no very great transition been metamorphosed into angels and radiant blessed seraphs; instead of cheering and consoling our spirits with these delightful Christian views and prospects, to go mourning all our days; *to refuse to be comforted because they are not*; to carry about with us a bosom heaving with incessant sorrows, a heart and spirit overwhelmed in the bitterness of despairing melancholy; night and day brooding over a dreary, dismal prospect; our eyes raining ceaseless streams of bitter briny tears; the sun a blank to us, music discord, innocent pleasure and cheerfulness madness and distraction; not so resigned to God as we ought to be, and thinking hardly of the Divine dispensations to us. Not that our religion forbids a just and becoming expression of our sorrows. Our religion doth not lay an embargo on any of those tender sensibilities of which our natures are formed susceptible. Neither our Divine religion nor the Author of it, either by precept or example, forbid our tears to flow or our hearts to feel a pang on the loss and departure of the objects of our fond affections. To drop a tear over the ashes of our departed friends is human, it is Christian. Jesus wept—shed a shower of affectionate tributary tears over the grave of his amiable departed friend Lazarus. A stoical apathy and insensibility is not a doctrine of the Christian religion. The gospel was not intended to extirpate our passions, but to moderate them. It would be cruel to interdict the heart those soft effusions which are the dic-

tates of our nature, and which afford such relief and ease to a mind overwhelmed with grief. For deceased worth, for departed amiable virtue, it permits us to *sorrow*, provided we do not *sorrow as those who have no hope.* Inconsolable, hopeless sorrow it leaves to unenlightened heathens, who have not the principles and views of Christians—have not their delightful transporting prospects to sooth and assuage their sorrows. Those who had no other glimpse of futurity but what the light of nature gave them; those whose prevailing notion it was that death put an end to all our existence—that life, and being, and happiness were all extinguished and vanished into air with our last breath—those who had these cheerless uncomfortable views, as the heathens had, who had no hope of any thing better and further than the grave, might consistently with their principles indulge the highest excesses of immoderate sorrow, and with disconsolate melancholy deplore the everlasting annihilation, and total, absolute, irrevocable extinction of the dear objects of their parental, fraternal, or filial tenderness—now for ever lost—to be seen and embraced no more—to be mingled with the common earth—reduced to their original principles—never more to be reassembled—sharing one common undistinguished destiny with the brute creation. Jews and gentiles, who in *their* religions enjoyed no clear and express discoveries of a future state, might on the death of amiable and beloved objects, as we find from their history they did, rend their clothes, put on sackcloth, throw ashes over their heads, tear their hair, beat their bosoms, refuse all proper sustenance for several days and nights, pierce the air with their cries and lamentations, use the most violent expressions of grief, and yield their hearts a prey to obstinate and sullen melancholy—they might commit these violences, who believed an utter annihilation at death, and consequently had every thing to fear from death; but such extravagances and excesses as these are highly unbecoming the virtuous professors of the gospel, who have every thing to hope from death, and who are taught to

believe that death is nothing more than the means of introduction and admission to a new and nobler life. I cannot but observe the language which the Scripture applies to the decease of our friends. It is truly beautiful and consolatory. *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are* ASLEEP: denoting that the state of insensibility into which they are fallen by death is but a temporary *repose*, from which they will *wake* in the morning of the resurrection. Their being is not annihilated—they are not *lost** out of the creation—there is not a total and everlasting extinction of their existence—their vital and intellectual powers are only for a few unperceived moments suspended—their sensibilities, and faculties, and capacities are only laid dormant for a momentary point of time in the grave, that they may recover and re-enjoy them with infinite advantage and improvement in the eternal world of light, perfection, and happiness. Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*, says our Lord, speaking of his decease, but I go to *awake* him out of his sleep. The disciples thought, says the evangelist, that he meant the refreshing repose of sleep, and judged it a favourable prognostic of his recovery: *Lord, if he sleepeth, he will do well; however, Jesus spake of his death;* and the phrase by which he expressed his death is, upon the Christian scheme, elegant, just, and instructive. The same beautiful expression of denoting death by *sleep* the apostles used. *Even so them, also*, says St. Paul, *who* sleep in Jesus, will *God bring with him.* Awakening and awful are the words of our Lord upon this subject, and it behooves the living to pay them a devout and most serious attention. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth*—come forth, not to enter upon a state of trial and probation any more—that is irrecoverably past; but shall awake and come forth—those who have done good in this world

* 1 Cor. xv. 18.

to everlasting life; those who have done evil, to everlasting destruction. O, blessed day! when we shall meet our deceased parents, our virtuous children, and all the wise and good whom we have known and read of in books, and embrace and congratulate each other with tears of joy, if the blessed can weep, at being ushered into a life that will never know pain, and sorrow, and death; and now all beginning a duration that will be commensurate with eternity, and last as long as God himself endures. We see, therefore, in the last place, the reason why, in the grief for friends deceased, in which the Thessalonian Christians were involved, the apostle tells them, *that he would not have them* to be ignorant of the joyful prospects Christianity opened before them, in order that by the power and energy of these great and glorious truths, he might alleviate and assuage their sorrows, and prevent them from indulging grief and melancholy to an unjustifiable excess. The principles of the gospel afford the best antidote to grief. It gives us such elevated views of the glory and blessedness of the eternal world as make us look down upon this fugitive introductory system with a great and noble indifference. It exhibits to our mind the glorious realities of the invisible world in such a strong and striking light, as infinitely diminishes the value of all terrestrial enjoyments, and causes us to prize nothing in this frail and transitory life as our chief good and ultimate felicity. I would not, therefore, have any Christian who reads these pages to be ignorant of this one great and animating truth concerning the pious dead, abundantly sufficient to dissipate, at least to alleviate, his sorrows: *that if we believe, as we profess to do, that Jesus died and rose again, even so them, also, who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*, and collect them into a happy, harmonious, and blessed society and assembly, to part no more, but to be mutually happy in each other through eternal ages. Hear, then, the consolatory words of Jesus, and may God dispose thee, reader, to receive all that comfort which his affectionate valediction was

designed to impart! *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

HAPPINESS OF GOOD MEN IN A FUTURE STATE.

BY SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH, D.D.

"There all the millions of his saints
Shall in one song unite;
And each the bliss of all shall share,
With infinite delight."

REV. xiv. 13.—*That they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.*

THE first subject of consideration concerning the future happiness of good men suggested in the text is *rest.*

The second is *enjoyment*,—"their works do follow them."

This figurative language evidently points to that high and *positive* state of felicity which the saints shall enjoy in heaven, which is the consequence and reward of their works. It conveys to us also, in the mode of expression, two other truths of the highest importance;—the first, that the habits of a holy life are necessary to qualify men for the possession of heaven; because without them they neither could desire it as their abode, nor could they enjoy the pure and spiritual pleasures that constitute to the pious the happiness of the place;—the second, that their rewards there shall be proportioned to the advances they have made in the divine life, and to the labours they have endured, the dangers they have encountered, and the services they

have performed for the benefit, and above all for the salvation of mankind, which is the service of Jesus Christ, their master and their Lord. On this subject the apostle Paul hath taught us—"he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully."

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, and one star differeth from another in glory; so also shall it be in the resurrection of the dead." The most pious, faithful, and successful servants of Jesus Christ shall shine with the highest lustre and enjoy the most consummate happiness in his eternal kingdom. What an animating motive was this to the fortitude of the primitive martyrs! What an illustrious, what a divine encouragement is it to the duty of every believer in Christ! If he does not reap his reward in this world, he shall receive one proportionably more rich and glorious in the world to come; where "the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Let us, my brethren, remember, however, the great and fundamental doctrine laid by the apostles as the foundation of our hopes,—that "it is not by *works of righteousness* which we have done, but by *grace* we are saved." Those works cannot be presented at the throne of divine justice as forming any absolute claim to the rewards of heaven; but they become, by the gracious promise of God, the title of a believer to a recompense that infinitely transcends any claim that can be grounded on the merit of human obedience. They follow him, not as a meritorious measure, but as measuring, so to speak, the infinite proportions of divine grace and of heavenly glory.

The gradations of rank, splendour, and felicity in the kingdom of heaven are but faintly and obscurely marked to us in Holy Scripture. It is more easy to impart to minds like ours some general apprehensions of the glory and perfection of the state of heaven, than nicely to trace its degrees. A scale of this kind

requires a knowledge of the subject more accurate and just than our limited faculties are able to receive even from the holy spirit of inspiration. Such a *scale* was not necessary to the end for which this revelation was made to the divine St. John, which was to encourage the martyrs in their mortal conflicts. Their cruel sufferings and their unshaken firmness would indeed procure for them a *higher rank* in the order of the heavenly state than others should attain who had not been called to give the same heroic proofs of their fidelity to their Lord. But it is the expected *glory and felicity* of that state that sustains the courage of a Christian, and enables him to triumph over the most formidable pains of death.

This felicity and glory is the subject chiefly pointed at in the text, and that to which, without entering into any representation that must at best be fanciful concerning the economy and the gradations of rank that may take place in the kingdom of God, I shall limit my view in the remaining part of this discourse. But how shall we describe that which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard*, and of which it hath not *entered into the heart of man* to conceive? It would require the colours of heaven and a divine pencil to represent that celestial "city which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, and there shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life."

The improvements and the sublime perfection of human nature shall be correspondent to the glory of its habitation. But both, perhaps, are equally out of the reach of our conceptions at present. We must actually have attained, before we can fully comprehend, those immortal powers with which the *body* shall be raised from the grave, and reunited to the soul, purified and exalted by a nearer approach to God. "It is raised,"

saith the apostle, "in incorruption—in glory—in power: it is raised a *spiritual body*."—Mark that bold and extraordinary figure. It is allied in its essence to the immortal spirit—composed of the most pure and active principles of matter that resemble the purity and activity of the soul—incorruptible in its organization like the diamond—splendid in its appearance like the sun—rapid and powerful in its movements like the lightning, that bears in its course an image of the omnipotence of the Creator.

The *soul*, purged from the dregs of sin, shall bear a higher resemblance of the perfection of God, in whose image it was first created. Its intellect shall be boundlessly enlarged—its affections shall be directed with immortal and unceasing ardour to the eternal source of love—and we have reason to believe that it shall enjoy the power of unlimited excursion into the works and, if I may speak so, into the essence of the Deity.

On a subject of which it is so far beyond the present powers of the human mind adequately to conceive, it becomes us to speak with modesty and caution. In judging of it—reason affords no lights to guide us—the fires of the imagination will only mislead us—we must take our ideas solely from the Scriptures of truth. And when we collect together all that those sublime oracles of wisdom have said upon this subject, and take from the whole those general views which they give of the state and felicity of heaven, we may range them under the heads of its *glory*, its *immutability*, and its *eternity*.

Its glory.—"It doth not, indeed, yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." There the redeemed shall dwell in the presence of God, who alone can fill the unlimited extent of their desires; there they live in the delightful exercise of an eternal love, and in the full possession of all that can render them supremely blessed; for, "in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right-hand are pleasures for evermore."

There they cease not celebrating in songs of ecstasy

the infinite perfections of God, and the boundless riches of redeeming love.—"Hallelujah! salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God." Worthy is the Lamb that was "slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." There, according to the emblematical language of the Revelations, they are seated on thrones, and receive from his hands celestial diadems; for, saith the Spirit, "they shall *reign* with him for ever and ever."

If human nature, notwithstanding all its present imperfections, is destined to such improvement and felicity, much more is it reasonable to believe that the eternal habitations of the pious, and the temple of the immediate presence of God, are infinitely superior in splendour and glory to all that we now behold in the sublimest or the most beautiful works of nature. When this veil of sense shall be withdrawn, what an unutterable scene of wonders shall be disclosed! Imagination cannot picture them—language cannot describe them; we have no powers at present capable of admitting or sustaining the view. Could we suppose a mole that grovels in the earth, enveloped in absolute darkness, and circumscribed to a few inches, to be endued with the powers of vision and reason, and suddenly admitted to contemplate with the eye of Galileo or the mind of Newton the splendours and boundless extent of the universe, its ravishments, its transports, its ecstasies would afford but a faint image of the raptures of the soul opening her immortal view on the glories of that celestial world.

But the glory of the heavenly state consists not only in the augmented powers of human nature and the external magnificence that adorns it, but in the holy and devout, and—may I not add?—the benevolent and social pleasures that reign there.

There "the pure in heart see God,"—there they "know even as also they are known,"—there they love without sin him whom it was their supreme delight to contemplate and to love on earth. Sometimes the

humble and devout believer, in the communion of his soul with God, or in the celebration of the precious mysteries of his grace in his temples here below, has enjoyed such discoveries of his infinite goodness and mercy as have been almost too powerful for the feeble frame of flesh and blood.—Ah! what then will be the manifestations of heaven! My beloved brethren, an Almighty power, a celestial regeneration will be necessary to enable you to sustain the unutterable bliss.

I have ventured to mention also the social and benevolent pleasures of that state. And it will not, perhaps, be the smallest part of the felicity of pious souls to enter into the society, to participate the joys, and to receive the congratulations of those perfect spirits who have never fallen from their rectitude, and of the saints redeemed from among men, who have gone before them to take possession of their promised rest. "There is joy in heaven," saith Christ, "over one sinner that repenteth,"—how much greater will be their joy when he has escaped the dangers of the world, when he has no more cause of repentance, when he has kept the faith, when all his conflicts and temptations are finished, and he has arrived at the end of his course, where nothing shall ever be able again to shake the security of his state, or to impair the plenitude of his happiness! What high enjoyment will it be to meet there his fellow-travellers through the dangerous pilgrimage of life, escaped from its pollutions and its snares. To meet there with "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets," with all the holy apostles and martyrs of Christ! To meet there the friends who were most dear to him on earth, whose souls were mingled with his! To meet there his fellow Christians out of every denomination,—on whom, perhaps, he had been accustomed to look with distrust and jealousy! Nay, more, to meet there devout men like Cornelius from every nation under heaven; and to see the grace of God infinitely more extended than those narrow limits which probably his prejudices had prescribed to it! What immortal consolations must fill the breasts of those who

"are come unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly of the church of the first-born, who are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

The immutability of the happiness of heaven is another character of it that deserves our consideration. The power of God will place the redeemed beyond the influence of temptation and sin, and the perfection of the heavenly state will for ever exempt them from all those causes of frailty and change that exist upon earth. It knows no change except that of continual progression. The principal value of all our sources of enjoyment in this world is destroyed by their instability. Every object here is mutable, and disappoints those who expect permanent felicity from it, and *pierces through with many sorrows* those who attempt to lean upon it. Even the comforts that flow from religion in the present life are variable and uncertain, because the sanctification of the believer is still partial and imperfect. But in heaven, being perfectly holy, he shall be completely and immutably happy.

Eternity is the idea that crowns and enriches the whole. "There shall be no more death," saith the *amen*, the faithful and true *witness*. The felicity of the saints, like the being of God, shall be interminable.—Glorious and consolatory truth! I would willingly assist your minds to frame some measures of an immortal existence, but how shall we measure a subject that so far surpasses our feeble conceptions? Number the stars that fill the sky—reckon the sands upon the seashore—count the drops in the immeasurable ocean—compute the atoms that compose the globe—multiply them by millions of years, and when this amazing succession of duration shall have been finished, and repeated as many times as are equal to its own units, eternity will be but beginning. Beginning!—It cannot be said to be begun. It is wrong to apply any term which measures progression to that which has no period.

In this astonishing and boundless idea the mind is overwhelmed. What a glory does it shed over the *inheritance of the saints in light!* How strongly is it calculated to awaken the desires of a believer after the *rest that remaineth for the people of God!* I may add, how well is it fitted to console those who mourn over their friends who sleep in Jesus! If, at any time, the mind is ready to sink under the weight of its sufferings in the present life, and to repine at the will of God, will it not become patient, and even thankful again, when it looks forward to that immortal blessedness to which every calamity that tends to crush this frail tenement of clay is only hastening our passage? "For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord! yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. What a consolatory, what a sublime and glorious object is here presented to the faith and hope of good men, and confirmed by the faithful asseverations of the spirit of truth! All the sufferings induced by sin in the present life there come to an everlasting period; all the joys that human nature, exalted and improved with immortal powers, can sustain, shall be possessed by the redeemed, and shall continually increase in an endless progression. There you behold them in the midst of their heavenly country, from which they shall be no more exiled—there they contemplate without a veil, in the clear unclouded vision of heaven, the adorable perfections of God—they behold him enthroned in glory ineffable, whence he dispenses happiness to countless myriads of blessed spirits. Rivers of pleasure issue from the foot of the eternal throne—they bathe themselves in those pure and celestial streams—they are absorbed in ecstasies of a divine and immortal love.

1 My brethren, what an animating motive to *perfect holiness in the fear of God* is proposed to your faith in the blessed promise of life and immortality. What a reward for all the labours and self-denials of virtue!—What a consolation under all the afflictions of life! The happiness of heaven is essentially connected with purity of heart, with sanctity of manners, and with usefulness of living; and your progress in these divine qualities shall be the measure of your eternal felicity. The path of perfect virtue, indeed, is laborious, and often passes in its course over steep and difficult ascents. Our passions frequently render extremely painful the sacrifices which duty requires. We are obliged to combat with the world, its interests, its pleasures, its examples, its solicitations, and, still more, to maintain a constant conflict with ourselves. But contemplate the sublime recompense which religion confers on these labours and these sacrifices, and they are arduous no longer. What are the enticements by which vice would ensnare the heart and withdraw it from virtue, compared with that *fulness of joy* that is in the *presence of* God, and those rivers of *pleasure* that flow at his *right-hand for evermore?* What are the labours or dangers of duty, compared with its triumphant reward! *Endure hardness*, therefore, *as good soldiers of Christ Jesus*, remembering that these short conflicts shall, ere long, gain for you crowns of victory, and encircle you with immortal glory.

Finally, this hope affords a good man the best consolation under affliction. All the necessary evils of life will soon be ended, and will open to him a peaceful entrance *into the joy of his Lord.* If disease and pain are hastening his *return to the dust, from which he was taken*, why should he repine, since they are at the same time bringing him to those *living fountains* of immortal health, where *God shall wipe away all tears from his eyes?* If the dearest ties of friendship or of love are broken asunder, and his heart is torn by cruel bereavements, religion enables him to find a sweet repose in God his best friend, and conducts his hopes to a speedy

and delightful reunion in the regions of the blessed with those pure and virtuous souls who were here most dear to his heart. In like manner, if poverty overwhelm him, or his fairest possessions have been blasted by the stroke of Divine Providence, are they not infinitely more than compensated in that *heavenly inheritance* to which, by divine grace, he is born? And when death comes to dissolve the temporary and decaying tabernacle in which he had sojourned in this barren wilderness, can he be dismayed, or yield to impious fears, when he sees beyond its flood the *land of* promised *rest*, in which there is prepared for him *a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?*

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord! yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

CONSOLATIONS FOR THE AFFLICTED UNDER THE LOSS OF FRIENDS.

BY WILLIAM DODD, D.D.

"To those bright courts when hope ascends
She calms the swelling wo;
In hope we meet our happy friends,
And tears forget to flow."

* * * * * * * *

From these considerations respecting God, we proceed to such as regard our departed friends themselves. God, who gave them to us, hath been pleased to redemand his own gift, and to take them away from us! why should we not say, *Blessed be the name of the Lord!* blessed be his name for vouchsafing them to us so long. He had a property in them before we had any; they were his before they were ours; now they are his eternally. And oh! say, would you have your beloved friends immortal here, only to please you? would you have them live, though weary of life, and stay be-

low, though longing to be gone? would you have them in misery, though fit for happiness? would you have them kept amid the troubles of life, the pains of sickness, the infirmities of age; or, at the very best, in the vain insipid repetition of the same round of things, only to prevent a vacancy in your amusements and delights? *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* Oh, surely, thou lovest thyself more than thy friend, or thou wouldst rejoice that he is delivered from all the evils of mortality!

Besides, we know the irreversible condition of humanity. A parting time must come; why then not this? If the time of parting with our friends were left to our choice, it would greatly increase our confusion! We know that we enjoy our friends only upon a very frail and uncertain tenure; why then should we not endeavour to reconcile ourselves to that necessary separation, which, indeed, is not the total loss, is not the utter extinction of our friends. Blessed be God, Christ hath brought life and immortality to light; and we are assured, that our dear friends do not cease from existing, they only exist in a different state and manner; a different and a far more happy;—for, though absent from us, they are present with the Lord; entered into joy unspeakable and full of glory! why then any immoderate grief? it can neither be profitable to us nor to them; it may do us much hurt, it can do them no good; it may weaken our bodies and prejudice our health; it may sadden our spirits, deprive us of the comforts, and indispose us for the duties of life! and what advantage can there be derived from so costly a sacrifice to their memory? do they need, can they be pleased with our tears, who have for ever taken leave of weeping themselves, and have such infinite cause for joy? Could your cries call back the departed spirit, and awaken the clay-cold body into life,—could you water the plant with tears till it revived, there might be some excuse for the abundance of your sorrow; but there are no *Elijahs* now, who may stretch themselves upon the breathless corpse and bring back its departed soul. *Wherefore*

should we weep? can we bring them back again?—we shall go to them, but they shall not return to us.

And can it be, would you have them return? do you lament their felicity? are you grieved for their happiness? would you wish to bring them back again? would you wish to have your dear child, your affectionate parent, your faithful consort, your valuable relation, now safely landed in the haven of eternal rest, would you wish to have them again placed on the uncertain shore of this life, and subjected to all its temptations and difficulties? would you have them walk over the precipice once more, fight the dangerous battle over again, again run the arduous race, be tempted, sin, and suffer again? would you have them indeed return for your gratification, from that holy place to this place of sin, from joy to trouble, from rest and peace to new vexations? their sentiments are different, their affections raised and ennobled, and as well as they loved us, they would not come back to us for all the universe; and yet, as well as we loved them, we cannot, for our unreasonable grief, wish them joy of their new elevation and dignity! —Oh! let us struggle against these unworthy apprehensions, and congratulate ourselves, that we have already friends dear as our own souls, friends for whom we could well have been content to die, that we have such already in the kingdom of God, and waiting to welcome us to that blessed and better country!

There is the joy, there is the grand source of consolation under the loss of friends,—we shall meet again! They are delivered from their trial, while we are left behind a few weary years longer; and behold, the time of our departure also cometh, when we shall follow our friends, and be for ever with them and with the Lord! For ever! comfortable truth, never more to hang over the dying bed, to catch the last mournful farewell, to hear the sad, agonizing, heart-rending groan! We shall meet, meet with an inexpressible reciprocation of endearing love and multiplied joy, to find ourselves all thus together, after our parting sorrows,—together, not in the world of trial, trouble, and sin, but in a place

where all things and persons that are anywise offensive shall be totally removed! No falseness or rancour, no partiality or mistake, no prejudice or infirmity, no malice or envy, no passion or pride shall ever discompose us there, nor aught be found to molest or hinder the heavenly pleasure circulating through every happy heart, and dwelling upon every joyful face and thankful tongue!

Let us elevate our souls to that blissful meeting, let us reflect upon its unspeakable comforts, and we shall silence all our complaints, and have only one anxious concern, how to improve our own souls and to secure the Redeemer's favour, that we may not fail to meet,—to meet, and enjoy for ever, those whose loss we so sensibly feel, and so tenderly regret. And let us observe, that this is a most awakening motive to the cultivation of sincere and undissembled friendship, to activity in all its kind and endearing offices, to the valuing our beloved and Christian minds; namely, to look beyond the narrow limits of this world, and the short satisfactions of the present transitory scene, to that future, that glorious meeting, the exquisite raptures of which the good heart may faintly conceive, but can never fully express. If we have any love for our friends, any tender desire to meet them again, this is one of the strongest arguments possible to incite us to a diligence in all the duties of our holy religion; for what anguish can be conceived so great as to meet those friends again, only to be condemned by the Judge which hath blessed them, and to be hurried, for ever hurried from them into misery eternal! —Surely, if we consider this, we shall be anxious to serve and honour our God, and so will the joy of our future meeting be certain and inexpressibly great.

Look not, then, oh afflicted mourner, to the breathless body and the devouring grave; hang not over the melancholy contemplation, nor esteem thy valued friend as for ever lost to thee; a day is coming, thrice happy, glorious day,—oh speed it, God of infinite love and goodness; make us fit, and hasten that joyful day!—a day is coming when thou shalt be set free from all the

anguish of distressful sorrow; when thy eyes, to weep no more, shall be closed on this world, and thy soul shall ascend to the paradise of God! There shall the enraptured parents receive again their much-loved child; there shall the child, with transport, meet again those parents in joy, over whose graves, with filial duty, he dropped the affectionate tears; there shall the disconsolate widow cease her complaints; and her orphans, orphans no more, shall tell the sad tale of their distress to the husband, the father; distress even pleasing to recollect, now that happiness is its result, and heaven its end!—There shall the soft sympathies of endearing friendship be renewed; the affectionate sisters shall congratulate each other, and faithful friends again shall mingle converse, interests, amities, and walk high in bliss with God himself; while all shall join in one triumphant acknowledgment of his wise and fatherly goodness, who from afflictions deduceth good, who bringeth men to glory, through much tribulation, and purifieth them for his kingdom in the blood of the suffering Lamb!

CHRIST'S ADDRESS TO THE WIDOW OF NAIN.

BY THE REV. JAMES WHYTE.

"——— Fond nature! cease thy tears;
Religion points on high:
There everlasting spring appears,
And joys that cannot die."

LUKE vii. 13.—*Weep not.*

THE affection of a mother towards her child is proverbial. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" To her, the heart turns instinctively in the hour of calamity, and never turns in vain. She will be alienated neither by misfortune nor crime. She will

hide the tear that moistens her cheek, lest it should seem to reproach the author of her woes.

Even a father's attachment towards his babe is great. Witness the bitterness of spirit which dictates the exclamation of the aged patriarch Jacob: "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me." Witness the agony of the monarch of Israel over the untimely death of a much loved, but profligate and rebellious son. "And the king was much moved, and went up to his chamber over the gate and wept; and as he wept, thus he said, O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Yet it is justly believed that a mother's love is still more ardent. Almighty God has graciously rendered her duty her blessing; and reconciled her to innumerable privations and toils, from which the father is daily exempted. To this she submits with the most cheerful alacrity, and will sacrifice—what will she not sacrifice for the comfort of her babe?

Though a family be numerous, it is the first wish of a parent's heart to see them spared: and it deeply wounds when one of them is cut down, while they grow up as olives planted around the table. But a calamity such as this paragraph records has brought down many a parent's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave; for the young man that was carried out was an only child—"the only son of his mother."

When the affections of the heart centre in one object they cling to it as their all. The loss of an only-begotten and well-beloved son is a calamity the most full of solemn and soul-subduing tenderness. It is one of those strokes which penetrate to the vital seat of happiness; which blight the fairest prospects, and excite the bitterest pangs which men endure in this world of wo. It was the lot of this female, however, to experience this poignant anguish: "to mourn for an only son, to be in bitterness for a first-born."

The calamity was greatly aggravated by her circum-

stances. "She was a widow." Possibly she had seen happier days; her prospects were fair and cloudless; but they were soon overcast. Death entered with relentless purpose within the pale of her domestic circle, and consigned her much-loved husband to the grave. Again and again had she visited the spot endeared by a thousand tender recollections. Again and again had she wept there, until the power of weeping no longer remained. She had a child, an only child. With the deepest solicitude she had watched over his infancy, and superintended the education of her orphan boy. She indulged the fond hope, that the house of her husband would be built up, and that his name would be revived and perpetuated in the person of his son. The beauties of his childhood, the opening talents of his youth, and his first efforts in business were all marked by her with exquisite delight. He grew up before her the image of his father; and with eyes glistening with tears of gratitude, she had looked upon him and said, "This shall be the companion of my widowhood, and the staff of my declining age; when I am old and gray-headed, he shall sooth my sorrow, smooth my dying pillow, and close my eyes in death." The heart of her child responded to her wishes. He said, "I will be as a husband to my mother."

My brethren, there is no security in human bliss. He died. His mother is now widowed and childless. He grew up fair and fresh as the gourd for the head of Jonah; but God had prepared a worm that smote it, and it withered. His youth struggled hard with death, and his mother clung to hope while there was a hope to cling to. Hour after hour, she sat watching his body as it hastened to decay; that feeble frame, which in infancy she had nursed with all a mother's anxieties and fears. With indescribable emotions, she watched the hourly ravages of disease, as now another and another rose fades from his cheeks. It is when the weeping mother is looking for the last time on the countenance, now faded and wasting, that the heart drinks in all the bitterness of human wo.

The current of life is fast ebbing away; the eye that once sparkled with vivacity is now covered with the film of death; ere long its light shall be extinguished; for a moment it brightens,—joy sparkles in it.—"Welcome, death and glory; farewell, world of wo; farewell, mother, dear to my heart; I go to my Father, and your Father—to my God, and your God. Living, I served you—dying, I leave you—and in eternity I will meet you. I die, but God will be with you." His tongue, about to become silent in death, faltered, while giving utterance to his last words; a languid colour reddened his cheek; as he gazed at her it grew dim—it fixed—it closed. The last breath is drawn—the last pulsation has beat—the spirit is gone. Those eyes, which erewhile gazed on his mother in fond affection, are now sunk in their sockets; the nerveless hand so closely locked in hers can no longer retain the affectionate grasp; that heart which sympathized in all her joys and griefs is now indifferent alike to every fluctuation of fear and of hope.

The distressed feelings of the widowed mother, who can describe? With emotions which cannot be uttered in words—with emotions which the heart only can record, she looked upon the cold and feelingless remains of her son—her only son, whom she loved.—A few days before, she had seen him young, virtuous, and happy. You who are parents will judge of her felicity then. You who have been rendered childless will judge of her affliction now. She, who yesterday rejoiced in the accomplishments and caresses of her son, now "refuses to be comforted, because he is not." But words were never designed to express the agonies of a fond mother, who finds herself husbandless and childless, in solitude and dreariness of domestic desolation.

My imagination pictures it to me—the trembling step and faded form of the bereaved mother, as she goes forth to lay in the grave her last child, and her last hope. The object of her affection has been removed from her sight, but cannot be torn from her heart. His excellence lives there, deeply chronicled in her bosom;

and the thought that she shall never see him more, touches every spring of painful sensibility, and to her soul says unutterable things. "Oh that it were with me as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shone upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of the Lord was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me, and when my children were about me; when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil." "Call me not Naomi; call me Marah, for the Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me."

The whole city had crowded spontaneously to mingle their sighs with the widow's tears. They were conducting the lifeless body to its long home. At this moment the Friend of sinners met the funeral procession. Amid the group of mourners, he knew that there was one bleeding heart, and he longed to bind it up. With the tenderest sympathy, he approached the sufferer; and in the kindest accents, said unto her, "Weep not." There was something about his manner which showed that he was a being of a purer world. Having aroused her from the stupor of grief, he touched the bier on which the dead was laid, and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." At the sound of his almighty word, the body which was about to be consigned to the cold grave begins to glow with renewed animation; the blood again flows through the swelling veins; the bosom heaves; the heart beats; the pale cheek warms with returning life; and the eye, once clothed in death, opens, and instinctively fixes on his mother.

To her bosom the Saviour restored him; and how precious the unexpected present was can only be conceived by that mother who has seen all the blossoms of life fading and falling; and who, after shedding tears of anguish over her only son, receives him "against hope," raised up from the very verge of the tomb.

Nature, lately labouring under a load of sorrow, is now ready to sink under an excess of joy. She did

wisely in not attempting to express her gratitude. At such a moment, her heart must have been too full for utterance. There are certain situations which defy description—there are certain emotions, silence only can explain: and on the present occasion, how eloquent is silence!

Our Lord Jesus Christ is immutable. He retains the same compassionate feelings, now that he sits enthroned in glory, as when on earth he healed by a miracle the broken spirit of this forlorn widow. "He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." "For we have not an high-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are; yet without sin: that he might know to succour them that are tempted."

In the second place, I would address these consoling words to those who are mourning the dissolution of Christian friends.

In most cases, the ties of life are not dissolved without dying struggles on the one hand, and living agonies on the other. The tears of separation would soon dry up, could we indulge the pleasing hope that the friend of our bosom would soon be restored to our embrace. But this hope we dare not indulge: as the cloud is consumed, and vanishes away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

The flowers, which wither at the approach of winter, put forth their leaves and blossoms in the spring. By the side of the blasted withered trunk we behold a new plant spring up from its roots, and flourishing under its protection; but the ashes of the dead revive not with the dews, and showers, and influences of spring. There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant. But "man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth

up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

No wonder, then, that the heart should bleed at every pore, when we think on the spot where their dust reposes. It is a spot which affection consecrates,—it is a dwelling to which the heart goes down. In such a case, when all that was loved was lost, and all that was anticipated with so much dread is felt, the mind broods over all their excellence, and the thought that we shall never see them more wrings the soul with indescribable anguish.

You know it—you who have closed the lifeless eyes of a husband, of a wife, or a child, and, in frantic agony, have clasped the lifeless form in a last embrace —you who have seen the tongue faltering in its last blessing and prayer, the eye fixed, and that sleep commencing which shall be broken only by the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.

We may speculate, and argue, and convince ourselves and others that regret is unavailing; but still nature pleads; feeling carries it over every other argument, and claims this period as her own.

My brethren, the religion of Jesus wars not with the pardonable infirmities of men. Joseph mourned with a great and very sore lamentation over the remains of his aged sin. Devout men carried out Stephen to be buried, and shed many tears over his bier. He, who was perfection itself, ennobled and vindicated those of Martha and Mary, by mingling his with theirs, over a brother's sepulchre, newly sealed. At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus wept.

It is not grief, but immoderate grief that is forbidden. It is the sorrow of unbelief, distrust, and discontent. It is proper that we should mourn; but it is criminal to repine. What Almighty God has planted he has an unquestionable right to destroy. Adore him that the boon was so long continued. Say in resignation, with

Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Immoderate sorrow injures the living, and cannot avail the dead. "While the child was living," says David, "I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether the Lord may be gracious unto me, that the child should live? But now that he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

Believer, has the one nearest and dearest to your heart been consigned to corruption and dust? "Weep not." If she is dead in the Lord, your loss is her unspeakable gain. While you were bedewing the clay-cold form with tears, or accompanying it in silent anguish to the mansions of the dead, the disembodied spirit has winged its way to the celestial world, and is now happy and blessed in the presence of its God. What a consoling and interesting thought is this! It has exchanged a ruinous tabernacle for a house not made with hands; the chamber of sickness for the region of unfading health; the cross for the crown of glory; the groanings of corruption for the song of the redeemed before the throne: and this earth, with all its disasters and woes, for the beatitudes of heaven, and the rapturous enjoyment of the presence of God.

And could you find it in your heart to wish them back? Could you be so selfish, and so cruel? Could you wish them back—back from the presence of the Lamb—back from the sweets of glory to the bitterness of time—back from those rivers of pure pleasure which flow full and large at God's right-hand, to the streams of mingled enjoyment in this vale of sorrow? After they have reached the haven of rest, would you recall them to struggle again with the storm? Is there any thing in the state or employments of those who surround the throne, which you are called upon to contemplate with sadness, or to deplore in the language of despair? Is it any subject of regret to them that their sun went down while it was yet day?

They have exchanged their polluted garments for the

robes of spotless purity; their eyes no longer flow down with tears; their tongues no longer utter the language of complaint. They are surrounded with cherubim and seraphim, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

The dust indeed covers their bodies; the worm feeds sweetly on them; they are mouldering and decaying. But God will yet redeem them from death, he will ransom them from the power of the grave. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you sorrow not even as those who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, also, them that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him."

Even to those of you who cannot indulge the hope that your deceased friends are in heaven, I would say, "Weep not." Weep not for them, but weep for yourselves.

Perhaps you never offered one prayer for their salvation. Perhaps you were accessory to their damnation. Perhaps your careless conversation led them into the broad road that leadeth to destruction. Weep not for them; weep for yourselves. Their destiny is fixed; your sorrow cannot reverse it. Even to the ungodly early death is a blessing. It is an act of mercy, as well as of justice. It precludes the possibility of indulging longer in sin, and this prevents the possibility of a deeper immersion in the gulf of endless wo. The longer an unconverted sinner lives, the greater mass of wretchedness does he accumulate against the day of wrath. Yes, he may well envy through eternity the babe that was carried out to the grave from its mother's womb; and well load with bitter execrations a day which commenced an existence which he cannot terminate, and which his own folly has rendered irremediably miserable.

I hasten to address the words, in the last place, to those saints of God who are alarmed at the prospect of their own dissolution.

There are some of God's children in whose frame there is one chord which cannot be touched, however

lightly, without producing despondency and gloom. The idea of death haunts them like a spectre, and fills them with indescribable horror. They can look beyond it with delight. It is lovely to descry the heavenly hills, and the multitudes of the redeemed walking in white with the Lamb on Zion; but the terrors of the passage, the darkness and corruption of the grave, are prospects terribly revolting to their imaginations, and they are kept in bondage through its fear.

Believer in Jesus, "Weep not;" the day of thy death shall be infinitely better to you than the day of your birth. Let the consolation which the gospel presents dissipate all your fears. It opens a vista through the gloom of death, and pours a full field of light on the darkness of the grave. It tells us that Jesus "liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and death." "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

The ocean spreads wide and dark before you; but it will waft you to Emmanuel's happy shore. "There thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself." This delightful prospect has made the dying saint sing upon his death-bed, when his friends around him were lamenting. This has made him lift up his head with joy, because the day of his redemption drew near. "When this corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Indeed, many who were exceedingly dispirited at the prospect of dissolution have triumphed gloriously amid its final agonies. Jehovah reserves dying grace for a dying hour. "My grace shall be sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness."

As the river rolls the smoother the nearer it approaches the ocean, and as the rose smells sweetest just when it begins to decay, so, at the believer's de-

parture, his graces shine with the most resplendent lustre. Thus have we seen the sun, at the close of a dark tempestuous day, bursting forth in all his radiance, sinking beneath the horizon in unclouded splendour, appearing at the moment most lovely and glorious.

Trust in the Lord, disconsolate believer; "At the evening time there shall be light." "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. DR. RYLAND.

BY THE REV. ROBERT HALL, A. M.

JOHN XXI. 7.—*That disciple whom Jesus loved.*

By the removal of a minister of Christ so able, so disinterested, so devoted, you have sustained a loss, the magnitude of which it is difficult to appreciate, much more to repair. A successor you may easily procure; but where will you find one who will so "naturally care for your state?" who, "instant in season and out of season," is willing to impart to you, not only the gospel, but his own soul also, because ye are dear unto him?" You may hear the same truths from other lips, supported by illustrations and arguments equally clear and cogent; the same duties inculcated by similar motives; but where will you find them enforced and recommended by an example equally elevated, an affection equally tender? Where will you look for another, whose whole life is a luminous commentary on his doctrine, and who can invite you to no heights of piety, but what you are conscious he has himself attained? When you add to this the effect of a residence among you of above thirty years, during which he became the confidential friend of your parents, the guide of your youth, and after witnessing the removal of one genera-

tion to a better world, was the honoured instrument of raising up another in their room; when you reflect on the continued emanations of wisdom and piety which proceeded for so long a space from this burning and shining light, you must be convinced that your loss is irreparable.

The removal of such a pastor, of one whose labours you have so long enjoyed, is an epoch in the history of a church; it is an event which no living generation can witness more than once; and it surely calls upon you to consider what improvement you have made of such advantages, and what is the prospect that awaits you, in the final day of account, when you and your pastor shall meet once more in the presence of the Judge; he to give an account of his ministry, you of its effect on your character. In relation to him, the event is not doubtful: "He has finished his course; he has kept the faith; henceforth there remains for him a crown of righteousness, which Christ the righteous Judge will give on that day." Would to God the issue were equally certain and equally happy on the part of those who so long enjoyed the benefit of such a ministry! That such will be the issue with respect to many who compose this auditory we cannot doubt; and with what inconceivable joy will he witness the felicity which awaits them, while he presents them before the throne, saying, "Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me." With what delight will they renew the intercourse which death had interrupted, and retrace together the steps of their mysterious pilgrimages; while the gratitude they will experience towards him who was instrumental in conducting them thither will be only inferior to that which they will feel to God and the Lamb.

How trivial will every other distinction then appear, compared to the honour of having turned many to righteousness; of having sown that seed which shall be reaped in life everlasting. A large portion of this felicity will, we cannot doubt, accrue to your pastor, from those who are accustomed to assemble within these

walls; but should it in any instance be otherwise, should the event be of a contrary nature, he "will be a sweet-smelling savour to God, even in them that perish." His happiness will be unimpaired, his reward undiminished, and the feelings with which he was wont to contemplate such a catastrophe will give place to sentiments of a higher order. The tears which he wept over souls in danger of perishing will be shed no more; all his agitation and anxiety on their account will be laid to rest; nor will they who refused to constitute his joy by their conversion be suffered to mar his felicity by their destruction.

It is not the church and congregation only, over which he presided with so much honour, that feels itself interested in this event. The sensation which it has produced is widely extended, and has reached every part of this great and populous city; a city sufficiently enlightened to comprehend his worth, and to mourn his loss. When a Reynolds, whose munificence flowed in a thousand channels, and whose example gave a new impulse to the public mind, quitted the scene which he had so long adorned with his presence and enriched with his bounty, that a general sensation should be excited is no more than might be expected. But that the removal of a Christian minister, who possessed none of these advantages, should produce a regret so universal and so deep, is a pleasing homage to the majesty of religion; a practical demonstration of the power it exerts over the consciences of men. If blessings are bestowed, and judgments averted, in answer to prayer, as the Scripture everywhere teaches, and the efficacy of prayer is proportioned to the fervour of faith and the perfection of obedience, it is impossible to say how much the inhabitants of this place may be indebted to our excellent friend, by whose removal they have lost a powerful intercessor with God.

By an extensive circle of ministers and churches, who shared his friendship, and on various occasions enjoyed his labours, his loss will be deeply lamented, and not without reason; for though the faithful dis-

pensers of evangelical instruction may now be reckoned by thousands, how few are left who can sustain a comparison with him, in all the qualities which adorn the gospel, and give the possessor power with God.

If the mere conception of the reunion of good men in a future state infused a momentary rapture into the mind of Tully,—if an airy speculation, for there is reason to fear it had little hold on his convictions, could inspire him with such delight, what may we be expected to feel who are assured of such an event by the true sayings of God? How should we rejoice in the prospect, the certainty rather, of spending a blissful eternity with those whom we loved on earth; of seeing them emerge from the ruins of the tomb, and the deeper ruins of the fall, not only uninjured, but refined and perfected, "with every tear wiped from their eyes," standing before the throne of God and the Lamb, "in white robes, and palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, Salvation to God, that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever." What delight will it afford to renew the sweet counsel we have taken together, to recount the toils of combat, and the labour of the way, and to approach, not the house, but the throne of God, in company, in order to join in the symphonies of heavenly voices, and lose ourselves amid the splendours and fruitions of the beatific vision.

To that state all the pious on earth are tending; and if there is a law from whose operation none are exempt, which irresistibly conveys their bodies to darkness and to dust, there is another, not less certain or less powerful, which conducts their spirits to the abodes of bliss, to the bosom of their Father and their God. The wheels of nature are not made to roll backward; every thing presses on towards eternity; from the birth of time an impetuous current has set in, which bears all the sons of men towards that interminable ocean. Meanwhile, heaven is attracting to itself whatever is congenial to its nature, is enriching itself by the spoils of earth, and collecting within its capacious bosom

whatever is pure, permanent, and divine; leaving nothing for the last fire to consume but the objects and the slaves of concupiscence: while every thing which grace has prepared and beautified shall be gathered and selected from the ruins of the world, to adorn that eternal city, "which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Let us obey the voice that calls us thither; let us seek the things that are above, and no longer cleave to a world which must shortly perish, and which we must shortly quit, while we neglect to prepare for that in which we are invited to dwell for ever. Let us follow in the track those holy men, who, together with your beloved and faithful pastor, have taught us by their voice, and encouraged us by their example, "that, laying aside every weight, and the sin that most easily besets us, we may run with patience the race that is set before us." While every thing within us and around us reminds us of the approach of death, and concurs to teach us that this is not our rest, let us hasten our preparations for another world, and earnestly implore that grace which alone can put an end to that fatal war which our desires have too long waged with our destiny. When these shall move in the same direction, and that which the will of Heaven renders unavoidable shall become our choice, all things will be ours; life will be divested of its vanity, and death of its terrors. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we then to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness."

TO MOURNERS.

BY THE REV. JOHN FLAVEL.

Then let our hearts repine no more
That earthly comfort dies,—
But lasting happiness explore,
And ask it from the skies.

LUKE vii. 13.—*And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.*

DULY to regulate and limit our sorrows is a high Christian attainment. So long as we are subjected to affliction, we shall be exposed to sin. If prosperity has its peculiar snares, so has adversity.

The text exhibits an instance of sorrow which excited the compassion of our Saviour, and which he, at the same time, tenderly represses. The circumstances of the case are strikingly described in the context. *Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.*

Every circumstance was piercing to the heart. It was the death of a *son*. To bury *any* child is grievous to an affectionate parent. But a son is expected to continue the name, and support the family. To bury a son, therefore, is usually esteemed peculiarly afflictive.

This son was a *young man*. Had he died in infancy, before affection was riveted, or expectation raised, the affliction had been less pungent. But death seized him in his flower and prime; at the very age which rendered him capable of realizing to a fond mother the hopes of many years, and of rewarding her for a thousand cares and labours.

Further; he was the *only* son of his mother. All her affections, hopes, and comforts centred in this one object. If to part with one child out of many is afflictive, what is it to lose *all in one?*

To complete the affliction, the bereaved mother was

a *widow*. In this condition, not only devoid of comfort, but exposed to oppression and to contempt, her staff, her solace, her safeguard, was at once removed. She had no husband to say to her, as Elkanah to Hannah—"Why is thy heart grieved? Am not I more to thee than ten sons?" Her grief was not a solitary grief; and the last calamity at once revived and aggravated the former.

Observe the treatment which this weeping widow received from Jesus Christ.

He met her at the gate of the city, not accidentally, but with the express design to work a miracle of mercy for her relief. There *he saw her*, and *he had compassion on her*. Surely her griefs were not few, nor small. But greater still, and more multiplied were the compassions they excited in the heart of Jesus.

Christians, your Redeemer is now exalted to heaven, and you *see him not*. But his eye is ever on you. Nor is he less sensibly touched with the infirmities and griefs of his people than when he tabernacled in flesh.

Observe particularly the *counsel* given to this disconsolate widow, by him who "comforteth those who mourn."—"*Weep not*." This is not an absolute prohibition of sorrow nor of tears. Christ does not condemn all expressions of grief for deceased friends as sinful. He would not have his people insensible. But he prohibits the excess and extravagance of their sorrow. He would not have them mourn for the dead like heathen,—who know not the consoling doctrine of the resurrection.

The resurrection of her son from the dead was the great instrument of comfort to the mourning widow. Well might the Saviour say "Weep not," when he intended so soon to remove the cause of her tears.

The case was peculiar and extraordinary. Mourners may not now expect to receive back their deceased friends. Such miraculous interpositions, with their occasion, have ceased. The omnipotence and divinity of the Saviour have long since received the most ample

confirmation. Yet even now, the surviving friends of those who have *died in the Lord* have the strongest grounds of consolation.

Our principal relief and comfort in the death of friends is drawn from the *general* resurrection. Thence the apostle derives it: 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18.—We shall see and enjoy our pious friends again at the coming of the Lord. Surely this is more than if we should *now* receive them immediately from the dead.

Our Saviour's counsel to this mourner applies then to Christian mourners at large; and it furnishes us this important instruction:—*that Christians ought to moderate their sorrow for their deceased relatives, whatever afflictive circumstances may attend their death.*

What I propose is,—to exhibit the signs of immoderate sorrow—to dissuade from its indulgence—to refute its pleas—and to point out its remedy.

I. In exhibiting the *signs* of immoderate sorrow, I will first state *how far grief may be indulged.* Thus we shall more easily see when it becomes excessive and sinful.

1. The afflicted must be indulged in *an awakened and tender sense of God's afflicting hand.* To bear what we do not feel is no virtue. Not to tremble when God smites is most unbecoming. To make light of his corrections is awful stupidity. For this the afflicted are rebuked. Jer. v. 3.—"Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved." When God smote Job in his person, his children, and estate, he rent his mantle and prostrated himself in the dust. This showed that he was not insensible. But he blessed an afflicting God. This showed that he was not stubborn and unsubmissive.

2. The afflicted must be allowed, within due limitation, to *complain both to God and man.* It more becomes a Christian ingenuously to open his sorrows, than sullenly to smother them. There is no sin in complaining to God, though there is much in complaining of him. The griefs of the heart are frequently relieved by utterance. This was David's resort,—"I

poured out my complaint before him: I showed before him my trouble."—Ps. cxlii. 2. To whom should children go to make their moan but to their father?—Whence may they expect relief and comfort but from him? Happy were it might every afflicted soul make this experiment. Did we complain more to God, he would complain less of us, and quickly send relief. O how moving, how prevalent is it with God, when his poor burdened people fly to him in their distress. When deep calls to deep, when one wave urges on another, then let the distressed soul address to the throne of heaven such language as this;—"Father, what shall I do? My soul is bowed down with trouble. Thou hast multiplied my sorrows. I have neither outward comfort nor inward peace. Wherever I look for relief I am disappointed. O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. Fathers of the flesh pity their distressed children when they complain to them; and wilt not thou, O Lord, have pity, whose compassion as far exceeds the compassion of creatures as the sea exceeds a drop? O, my Father! pity me, support me, deliver me!"—Such appeals are acceptable to God, and advantageous to the soul.

We may also make our complaint to man. Job did so:—"Have pity upon me," says he, "have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." It is a great mercy if we have friends who are wise, faithful, and experienced. They are born for such a time as this. Prov. xvii. 17. Still, they cannot pity as God; nor relieve and succour as he. Often we may say with Job (chap. xxi. 4)—"As for me, is my complaint to man? And if it were, why should not my spirit be troubled?" What great advantage in these complaints? I may burden the heart of my friend; but I get little ease for my own. Yet the opening of the heart to an experienced tender Christian is some relief; and to engage his prayers is still more important.

3. The subject of affliction may ordinarily *judge and condemn himself as the guilty procurer of his own troubles.* Rarely does a great affliction befall a good man,

but he saw, or might have seen, the need of such a rod before he felt it. Has God smitten your child, or friend, and might you not have anticipated the stroke? Were you not in such a carnal frame as to need the rousing, purifying influence of affliction? But whether you anticipated the trial or not, it is now your duty to examine yourself. "Let us search and try our ways," says the afflicted church. In the day of trouble, a gracious soul is inquisitive about nothing more than the *cause* of the Divine frowns. "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me?" Lord, what is the particular corruption which this rod is designed to rebuke? For what sinful neglect would it humble me? O discover it to me, and reclaim me from it.

Having discovered the cause of their trouble, sincere souls will take shame to themselves, and give glory to God by humble submission, and by vindicating the equity of the Divine conduct. "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men?" "Holy men," says one, "after their hearts are renewed by repentance, are not ashamed to remember and confess their faults, to the glory of God; for they account not that glory as lost which is transferred from themselves to their Maker."

It is true, God may afflict in sovereignty; or simply for our trial. But we may always see in ourselves cause enough for the affliction; and it is safe to charge it to our own sinful folly.

4. The afflicted Christian may *earnestly, though humbly and submissively, plead for relief.* When affliction presses us above our strength,—when it disables us for duty, or gives advantage to the tempter, we may adopt the prayer of David,—"Remove thy stroke from me." Even Christ, in the day of his trouble, poured out his soul with strong cries and many tears, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me." Oppressed nature desires relief; and even our renewed nature seeks exemption from those encumbrances which retard us in duty, or expose us to sin.

Thus far mourners may indulge their grief. But sorrow becomes *excessive and sinful*,

1. When it *causes us to disregard remaining mercies and enjoyments*. Often the setting of one comfort obscures and benights all the rest. Our tears for enjoyments lost blind us to the many mercies which remain. But this is very sinful. It involves ignorance, ingratitude, and great provocation.

It is a sin springing from ignorance. Did we know the desert of our sin, we should rather wonder that one mercy is left, than that many are withdrawn. Did we know that sovereign Being at whose command our comforts come and depart, and who can in a moment destroy all which remain, and ourselves with them, we should more highly value the mercies which he spares, and be more thankful for them. Did we know the case of thousands, perhaps far better than ourselves, who in all their lives never knew such enjoyments as we still possess and yet overlook, we could not think thus lightly of our mercies.

And what vile ingratitude is this!—Are all your remaining mercies worth nothing? You have buried a child, a friend,—but still you have a husband, a wife, other children, and friends. If you have not, you have comfortable accommodations, and health to enjoy them. Or, if not thus favoured, you have the ordinances of God, and, it may be, an interest in Christ and in the covenant, the pardon of sin, and hopes of glory. And can you sink into despondence, as if all your mercies, comforts, and hopes in both worlds were buried in one grave? Must *Ichabod* be written upon your best mercies, because mortality is written upon one?

In a word, such a temper tends to *provoke the Holy One* to proceed in judgment till he has made a full end of your comforts. What if God should in just anger withdraw those undeserved, disregarded favours which you still possess? What if he should commission death to smite a husband, a wife, or children, yet left? What if he should send sickness, losses, poverty, re-

proach? If, indeed, you are out of Christ, you are in danger of what is far more dreadful than all this. What if God should say, "Dost thou undervalue my goodness and forbearance? Is it nothing that I have spared thee thus long in thy sins and rebellion?" And what if he should stretch out his hand and cut the thread which has kept thee for so many years from dropping into endless misery?

O think how dangerous it is to provoke the Lord by ingratitude, when he has already come out in judgment. Even if you are in the number of his own people, of those who will finally be saved, you know you have better mercies to lose than any you have yet lost. Should it please God to cloud your soul with doubts, should he let loose Satan to buffet you, and should he remove all inward peace and joy, you would soon be convinced that the funeral, even of your dearest friend, was comparatively a small thing.

2. Our sorrows are sinful when they *so entirely absorb our minds that we are insensible to the calamities which afflict the church and people of God.* Some Christians have such a public spirit, that the troubles of the church swallow up their personal afflictions. Melancthon was so much oppressed by the calamities of the church, that he took comparatively little notice of the death of a most beloved child. Eli manifested a gracious and public spirit, when he received the intelligence that Israel had fled before the Philistines, that his two sons were dead, and that the ark of God was taken. Had the message stopped at the death of his sons, he might have supported the burden. But at the mention of the *ark of God*, even before the narration was finished, he presaged the issue, and immediately sunk down and died. The loss of the ark was more to him than that of sons and daughters.

But how rare, in this selfish generation, is such a public spirit, even among professors of religion. May we not complain with the apostle (Phil. ii. 21), "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Few extend their cares beyond the sphere of their pri-

vate interests. And the *sorrows* of most are not less confined at home. If a child die, we are ready to die with it; but public calamities afflict us little. How few are there who *lose* either their domestic comforts in the church's troubles, or their domestic troubles in the church's mercies. Now when it is thus,—when we little regard the mercies or sufferings of others, but are wholly absorbed by our own afflictions, our sorrow is sinful.

3. Our sorrows are excessive and sinful when they *divert us from our duties, or distract us in them.* How prone are we to indulge solitary and protracted musings concerning a departed friend! yet how hard to fix our thoughts on the living God! When our hearts should be in heaven with our Saviour, they are in the grave with our dead. May not many afflicted souls justly complain that their troubles have taken away their Saviour (I mean in regard to sensible communion), and placed the lifeless child in his room? Ah, cease to weep longer for your deceased relation, and weep rather for your dead heart. Is this your compliance with the design of your afflicting God?—Will you become more a stranger to him than before? Is this the way to comfort,—to refrain prayer, and turn your back on God? Or if you dare not wholly neglect the duty, yet your affliction mars your success. Your heart is wandering and distracted in prayer and meditation, so that it affords you neither comfort nor relief.

O Christian! consider this is not right. Surely the rod operates not kindly now. Did your love to God expire when your friend expired? Is your heart as cold in duty as his body in the grave? O banish this temper without delay, lest you find by sad experience that what you now mourn is inconsiderable, compared with what you will mourn hereafter. To lose the spirituality and warmth of your affections is much more than to lose the wife of your bosom, or the loveliest child that ever a fond parent laid in the grave.

Reader, if this be your case, you may challenge the first place among mourners. It were better for you to

bury ten sons than remit one degree of love to God, or delight in him. His end in smiting was to bring your heart nearer to him, by removing what estranged it. Will you thwart this merciful design? Surely the troubles which accompany you to the closet, and mar its duties, are extravagant and sinful. The case is the same,

4. When *your sorrows so oppress and sink your animal frame as to endanger life, or unfit you for active duties.* "Worldly sorrow works death;" that is, the sorrow of worldly men, sorrow merely natural and carnal, and not relieved by spiritual reasonings and considerations. This sorrow is sometimes so oppressive that the body sinks under its weight, and diseases are induced which are never removed. Excessive grief has ever been considered by physicians one of the principal causes by which human life is shortened. Its subjects have no mercy on their own frames; for while they indulge without restraint in the enervating luxury of grief, they frequently deny themselves the comfort of sleep, and other necessary refreshments.

This is very sinful, and highly displeasing to God. In his great mercy he would not have us "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow," even though that sorrow be for sin.—2 Cor. ii. 7. How much more would he have us restrain our griefs for temporal losses! Indeed, are there not other and better purposes to which our health and energies may be devoted? May not the time come when we shall earnestly wish we had that strength to spend for God which we now prodigally and unavailingly waste upon our troubles?

5. Our affliction is sinful when it *sours the spirit, and excites inward murmurings against God.* Whatever God does with us or ours, we should maintain honourable thoughts of him. A gracious heart cleaves closer to God in affliction, and justifies him in his severest strokes. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right" (such is its language), "and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me." In this way the soul may obtain comfortable evidence of its own uprightness,

To have affectionate thoughts of God when he smites us in our dearest comforts argues that we love him for himself, and not for his gifts only. It argues that his interest in the heart is deeper than any earthly interest. And the comfort which some have derived from such discoveries of their own hearts in severe affliction has been so great, that they would not part with it to have all their lost blessings restored.

But to swell with secret discontent, and indulge hard thoughts of God, as though he had treated us with injustice or with unparalleled severity, is a vile temper; evil fruit from the evil root of a carnal, ignorant, proud heart,—at least, from a heart much distempered, if ever renewed. Thus it was with Jonah, when God smote his gourd. "I do well," said he, "to be angry, even unto death." This was not his ordinary frame, but a surprise; the effect of a paroxysm of temptation, and of passions overheated. Few dare utter such language. But many have their hearts imbittered by discontent, and secret risings against the Lord. *This*, if ever their eyes are opened, will cost them more pain than they ever felt from the affliction which occasioned it.

6. Our sorrows exceed due bounds when we *voluntarily excite and exasperate them.* It is strange that we should find pleasure in stimulating our grief into exercise. Yet there is truth in the remark of Seneca, that sorrow itself has a kind of delight attending it. The Jews who came to Mary's house to comfort her, "when they saw that she went out hastily, followed her, saying, She goeth to the grave, to weep there;"—"as those do," says Calvin, "who seek to provoke their troubles by going to the grave, or often looking upon the dead."

Thus we delight to look upon the relics of our deceased friends, and often to mention what they have done or said; and this not so much for the purpose of instruction or imitation, but rather to draw fresh blood from our wounds by piercing ourselves anew. Many parents will converse for hours on the features, actions, and remarks of their deceased children, weeping at the

recital, and thus causelessly keeping open the wound for months after its infliction, and excruciating their hearts without benefit. Perhaps a lock of hair, or something similar, is preserved, the sight of which may daily renew their grief.

I am far from recommending an inhuman forgetfulness of our dear departed relatives. It is as reprehensible as this childish unprofitable remembrance. Oh, friends! we have other things to do in affliction than these. Were it not better to search our hearts and houses when God's rod is upon us, and study how to answer its designs by mortifying and putting away the sins which provoked it? Surely, till we are thus employed, affliction has not accomplished its end.

7. Our sorrows are sinful when *they shut our ears against seasonable instructions and consolations.* Thus "Rachel wept for her children, and refused to be comforted, because they were not." So pertinacious are many in the indulgence of grief, that no counsel, no comfort can find its way to their minds. Some display a perverse ingenuity in evading every argument of comfort. Even if driven from every plea, they are still immoveably fixed in their grief. Every consolation administered is disregarded or forgotten. Their feelings are those of the Psalmist (Ps. lxxvii. 2), "My soul refused to be comforted."

To want comfort in the time of trouble aggravates affliction. But to refuse it when offered is sin. The time may come when, however welcome a word of support might be, it will be denied. It is a great mercy to the afflicted to have with them a *Barnabas*, an *Interpreter, one among a thousand.* And it is their great sin and folly to spill like water on the ground those cordials which are presented them. Say not with those desponding souls (Lam. iii. 18), "Our hope is perished from the Lord; remembering our affliction and misery, the wormwood and the gall." It is sad indeed that a Christian should be so disgusted with the wormwood and gall of affliction as to be unable to relish the sweetness to be found in Christ and the promises.

Thus, having pointed out the sin and danger of mourners, I am,

II. To *dissuade* them from these forbidden excesses, and to inculcate a temperance in their sorrow.

I know how difficult is the task to silence grief, and allay the tumult of passion. The very attempt sometimes causes it to rage and swell the more. The work is the Lord's. Its success depends entirely on his power and blessing. He who says to the stormy ocean "Be still," can compose the tumults of the afflicted bosom.

Sorrow goes its destined round, and visits all characters without distinction. The righteous and the wicked pass in their turn under the rod. I am a debtor to both; and shall endeavour to afford to both support and assistance. Surely the unregenerate need our compassion and aid. Their affections to their relatives, though irregular, are strong and tender. Their bereavements are felt with pungent emotions; nor must they be left to sink under their sorrows.

We cannot, indeed, directly offer them those reviving cordials which are found in Christ and in the covenant for God's afflicted people. They have no interest in Christ, nor in the promises. If this be your case who read these lines,—afflicted and unsanctified; mourning bitterly for deceased friends, and having more cause to mourn for a dead soul; Christless and graceless, as well as childless or friendless, full of trouble, yet without faith or prayer to ease your heart,—alas! your case is sad; yet do not wholly sink, nor suffer yourself to be swallowed up of grief. You have laid your beloved in the grave, yet do not precipitate yourself into the grave after him. This will be no remedy for your grief. Be entreated to ponder these *three* things:—

1. Of all persons in the world, you have most reason to be tender of life and health, and careful to preserve them; for if your troubles destroy you, you are eternally lost—undone for ever. *Worldly sorrow works death.* And if it works your death, it works your perdition too. If a believer dies, the second death has no power over him. But wo to you, if death overtakes you in your

sms. Beware then what you do against health and life. Be cautious of breaking that thread by which you hang over endless burnings. It is better to be childless or friendless on earth, than hopeless or remediless in hell.

2. Acknowledge and admire the distinguishing goodness of God to you, that when death was commissioned to smite one in the family, you were passed by. Your husband, wife, or child is taken, and you are left. Had your name been in the commission, you had now been beyond the reach of hope

But Oh, the sparing mercy, the wonderful long-suffering of God to you! Perhaps the relative you have lost never provoked God as you have done. Your departed child may never have abused such mercies or neglected such calls as you, nor treasured up the thousandth part of your guilt. Astonishing patience of God! You are warned, but not smitten. Is there nothing in this which claims thankful acknowledgment? Is it not better to mourn on earth, than to mourn in the regions of despair? Is it not easier to go to the grave of a deceased friend, and weep there, than to be banished where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for ever?

3. This affliction, which seems so grievous, may prove your greatest, richest mercy. God has now *made your heart soft with trouble*. He has shown you how vain is this world, and how poor the sources to which you looked for happiness. A dark cloud overshadows all your earthly comforts. Should the Lord graciously interpose, and by this affliction open your eyes to your own deplorable state, and divorce your heart for ever from a vain, unsatisfying world, and bring you to choose Christ, the only real and permanent good, for your portion, what an unspeakable mercy! Should your affliction imbitter sin; should the death of your friend turn your attention inward upon your soul; a soul as cold to God and things spiritual as a dead body, and more loathsome to Infinite Purity; surely this would be a happier day than you have yet seen. Such is sometimes the merciful method of Heaven.

"If they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, then he showeth them their work, and their transgressions, that they have exceeded; he openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity." Job xxxvi. 8, 9, 10.

Consider, pensive mourner, that which stole your heart from God is gone. That which engrossed your time and thoughts, and left no room for Christ and eternal realities, is gone. All your high-raised expectations from that beloved object which now moulders in dust are perished in a day. What a motive, what an *advantage*, to raise your thoughts to heaven! Should a blessing attend the rod, this day of sadness will occasion you many a day of thanksgiving.

Be entreated to consider these things. Other consolations I may not directly offer you. Alas! the best of consolations are those which your spiritual condition excludes. They belong to the people of God. They spring from that religion to which you are a stranger. Yet while I turn from you to Christians, and point out those richer comforts which belong to them, it is proper that the subject should be seriously considered by you. You will thus be convinced how privileged, how happy are the children of God, amid their greatest outward trials. You will perceive what is that *peace* which they may enjoy amid all the tribulations of the world.

Such I may attempt to counsel and comfort, with animated hopes of success. You fear the Lord. You tremble at his word. To you the greatest affliction is not so formidable as the least sin. You would rather bury all your children than provoke and grieve your heavenly Father. Your relatives are dear, but Christ is far dearer. Retire then to your closets; redeem a little time from sorrow; and implore the blessing of God on the following considerations.

Consideration 1. *The Author of your affliction is God. It therefore becomes you meekly to submit.* "Be still, and know that I am God." The single thought that *the Lord has done it* should silence every objec-

tion. "Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." For a creature to quarrel with the God who made him is shocking. May not he who formed you and yours dispose of both as he sees best? May he not do what he will with his own? Say then with Eli, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." Bow to the holy sovereignty of that God, who does his pleasure among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of earth. Turn your eyes away from your affliction, to the perfect and unerring Author. Consider who he is, and what you are. Pursue the contemplation, till you can say from the heart, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Consideration 2. *The comforts of which you are deprived were not your principal comforts.* Children and other relatives are common blessings, bestowed promiscuously on the friends of God and his enemies. Indeed, the wicked have often, in these respects, the advantage of the pious. It is a mistake to consider our happiness as necessarily connected with these created enjoyments. We may be happy without them. Our dearest relatives are not our chief good. They may all fail us, and yet our souls be both safe and comfortable. And as God hath better comforts for his people than these, he can send greater afflictions than the loss of them. Had he spared your children, and indulged you with outward prosperity, and at the same time inflicted spiritual judgments on your souls, how much more mournful had been your condition! Remember, it was not the Saviour's design to purchase for you a sensual happiness, a life of earthly comforts, but to redeem you from all iniquity, to sanctify your natures, to wean your hearts from this vain world, and so to order your lot, that finding no rest on earth, you might sigh and pant for that rest which remains to the people of God. And are not afflictions excellently calculated to promote this gracious design? Is it not a mercy to be deprived of those objects, however dear, which were

so many clogs and encumbrances in your journey to heaven?

Consideration 3. *However early or unexpected was the dissolution of your friends, you enjoyed them every moment allotted by Heaven.* Before your lamented relative was born, the time of your mutual enjoyment and your separation was unalterably fixed in the decrees of Heaven. To you, indeed, this period was a secret while your friend lived. But now it is made manifest by the event. Nor was it possible that his life could be either protracted or abbreviated a single moment.

This assertion is amply justified by the explicit testimony of Scripture; particularly by that passage in Job (xiv. 5), "His days are determined; the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds, which he cannot pass." A firm conviction of this truth will conduce much to your peace, and will shield you from many a useless and agonizing reflection.

How common for survivors to wish that this had been done, and that omitted! How common to think, that but for such mistakes, or oversights, the dear husband, wife, or child had still lived! But no; the Lord's time had come; and all things concurred to accomplish his pleasure.

Still let it be remembered, that the decree of God nowise excuses voluntary neglects. These things he overrules to accomplish his own purposes; but he does not approve them. Yet the consideration of his governing providence affords great relief in view of those unavoidable mistakes which sometimes occur in the treatment of the sick.

Parents! you never had a thought that your dear children were *born* too soon. Why then should you regret that at the appointed hour and moment they should be delivered by death into a better life? Nor let any say that the death of their children is *premature.* Those whom God intends to bring early to heaven he can ripen for that blessed region, in ways inconceivable to us. Though cut off in the bud, they may be still mature. Remember that the seasons of the year are

not more wisely or more unalterably fixed, than the seasons of your comfort in children and other earthly friends.

Consideration 4. *Whatever may be your grief for the death of your children, it might have been still greater from their life.* Bitter experience led a good man once to say, It is better to weep for ten children dead, than for one living. What a heart-piercing affliction was David's! "Behold," says he, "my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life." How many parents have had their lives imbittered, or shortened, by the misconduct of children!

True, your love to your children will scarcely admit the thought of this as possible in your own case. They appeared innocent and amiable; and you fondly believed, that through your care and prayers they would have become the joy of your hearts. But may not Esau, when a child, have promised as much comfort to his parents as Jacob? Probably he had as many of their prayers and counsels. But as years advanced, he despised their admonitions, and filled their hearts with grief. As a promoter of family religion, who ever received such an encomium from the God of heaven as Abraham? How tenderly did the good man pray for Ishmael! "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" Yet how little comfort did Ishmael afford.

Alas! in these days of degeneracy, parents much more frequently witness the vices of their children than their virtues. And even should your children prove amiable and promising, you might live to be the wretched witnesses of their sufferings. Some parents have felt unutterable agonies of this kind. This introduces a

5th Consideration. *God may have taken the lamented objects of your affection from the evil to come.* When extraordinary calamities are coming on the world, he frequently hides some of his feebler children in the grave. Isa. lvii. 1, 2. Surely, at such a portentous period, it is happier for such as are prepared to be lodged in that peaceful mansion, than to be exposed to

calamities and distresses here. Thus intimates the prophet Jeremiah (xxii. 10), "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country." It was in a day when the faith and patience of the saints were peculiarly tried, that the voice from heaven said, "Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth."

Are not troubles approaching now? Do not the clouds gather blackness?—your friends are privileged to die, while you are left to conflict with the storms of life. Now, if troubles come, your cares and fears will be fewer, and your own death more welcome. By one merciful dispensation God provides for their safety, and your own easier passage to them. In removing your friends beforehand, he seems to say to you, as to Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now: but thou shalt know hereafter." The eye of Providence looks much farther than yours. Probably it would be more difficult for you to leave them behind than to follow them.

Consideration 6. *A parting time must come; and may not this be the best?* You knew beforehand that your child was mortal, and that the tie which bound you together must be severed. What did you receive at his birth, but a mortal being? And are you surprised to see a mortal being yield to death?—"He who complains," says Seneca, "that one is dead, complains that he was a man." To be human is to be mortal. Whatever inequalities attend our lives, the great statute law of heaven makes all equal at last. "It is appointed to men once to die."

Perhaps you think that this is the least favourable time for parting; and that had you enjoyed your friends longer, you might more easily have resigned them. But how are you deceived in this! The longer the period of enjoyment, the more strongly are the affections riveted, and the more painful is the separating stroke. Happy is it for us, and for ours, that our times are in God's hands, not in our own. Those who are in Christ, and in the covenant, cannot die unseasonably,

Though cropped in the blossom, or the bud, they are still ripe for immortal glory.

As their death was most seasonable to them, so was it likewise to you. Had they lived longer, not only would your increased affection have rendered parting more difficult, but you might have seen such displays of corruption as would have filled you with perplexity and distress respecting their state. Surely, the Lord's time is best. In nothing do we more discover our folly than in wishing to determine the season of our comforts and our troubles. Of the one, we are prone to think they can never come too soon; of the other, that they cannot come too late. But let us commit both the one and the other to Him whose works are all perfect, and all beautiful in their season.

Consideration 7. *In this day of trouble, recollect your covenant with God, and the solemn engagements you made when you took him for your God.* Think of that period, when a heavier load of grief pressed upon your heart than now; when the burden of sin, the curse of the law, with the dread of death and hell, sunk you almost into despair. What was your language then? Was it not this? "Lord, give me Christ, and deny me whatever else thou pleasest. Pardon me, save me, and I will never repine. Do what thou wilt with me; let me be friendless, childless, poor, any thing but Christless, graceless, and hopeless."

And when God heard your cry, and showed you mercy,—when he constrained you to submit to Christ, and to the terms of the covenant, was not this your language to your Saviour?—"Lord Jesus, here am I, a guilty, wretched sinner. Fear and trouble on the one hand; on the other, a just God, a condemning law, and everlasting burnings. But oh, blessed be God for the interposition of a Mediator! Thou art my only hope; thy blood, my only remedy. Thou hast said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Thou hast promised, 'Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out.' Thus encouraged, blessed Jesus, I come to thee. I come

doubting, trembling, yet willing, and make a covenant with thee this day. I take thee, this day, as my Lord, and submit to all thy disposals. Do what thou wilt with me, or mine. Let me be rich or poor, any thing or nothing in this world, as thou pleasest. This day I likewise give myself to thee. All I am, all I have, shall be thine; thine to serve thee, thine to be disposed of at thy pleasure. Thou henceforth art my sovereign Lord, my last end, my portion, my all."

Now then, Christian, fulfil your solemn engagements. Christ has disposed of your dear relative as he pleased; and thus he tries your uprightness in covenanting with him. Where then is your promised contentment with his disposals? Where your covenanted submission to his will? Did you except the present affliction? Did you say, "Lord, I consent that thou shalt take, when thou pleasest, any thing I have, save only my husband, my wife, or this dear child? This I reserve. I can never part with this."—If so, all you did was hypocrisy. If you were sincere, you had no reserves. You gave your Saviour *all*. And will you now conduct as though you repented, at least had *forgotten*, your engagements? Has Christ failed on his part? Can you charge him with the smallest instance of unfaithfulness? Oh! if you cannot, see that you too be faithful.

Consideration 8. *In addition to your covenant with God, call to mind his covenant with you.* Is your family, which was lately in peace and prosperity, broken up and scattered? Have those dear objects to which you looked as the solace of your declining years, and your memorial in a future age, taken their flight? Do you, in cheerless solitude, and with many tears, peruse the words of Job?—"O that I were as in months past, as in the day when God preserved me!—As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me."

Still, in this desolate condition, be comforted with the covenant which God has made with you. David was afflicted, not only in the death of children, but still

more, in the wicked lives of children. Incest, murder, and rebellion in his family combined to pierce his heart. Yet what sweet comfort does he derive from the covenant of grace! "Although," says he, "my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire; although he make it not to grow." The covenant made with him by God comforted him, although his house did not increase, and although those who remained were not such as he desired. So should all who are interested in the covenant be comforted, in every family bereavement and affliction. For,

1. If you are God's covenant people, though he may afflict, he will never forget you. "He is ever mindful of his covenant." You are as much on his heart in your deepest affliction as in your highest prosperity. You find it hard to forget your child, though turned to corruption. Day and night your thoughts dwell upon it, untired. But surely it is easier for you to forget, I will not say a child departed, and mouldering in the dust, but the most endeared child you have *alive*, than for your God to forget you. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" Can such a monster be found? Possibly there may. "Yet," saith God to every believer, "I will not forget thee." His covenant is everlasting.

2. He will direct all your troubles to your good. It is a *well-ordered* covenant. It so disposes all your trials, that they shall conspire to make you happy.

Possibly you cannot see how the present affliction should be for your good. You may be ready to say with Jacob, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not; and will ye take Benjamin away? All these things are against me." But believe it, your affliction is the result of covenant love and faithfulness. It shall certainly issue in your eternal benefit. You have therefore reason to be not merely resigned, but thankful.

3. This covenant is not only well ordered in all

things, but *sure*. You fondly dreamed that you were *sure* of the creature comfort which has forsaken you. Perhaps you said of your child, now gone, as Lamech of his: "This same shall comfort us." But, you see, you built on the sand. And where were you now, had you not a firmer foundation for your hope and comfort? Be thankful that *covenant mercies* are more sure and lasting. Of your God, of your Saviour, and of heaven none can deprive you. No created enjoyment can say to you, as God says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The dearest husband must be parted with. The most beloved wife must be resigned. From your children, who are as your own soul, you must be separated. Yet, blessed be God! there is something that abides. "All flesh is as grass, and its goodliness as the flower of the field. But the word of our God shall stand for ever."—There is so much of support comprised in this single consideration, that could but your faith fix upon it, and realize it, and apply it, I might at once lay down my pen, and consider my work as accomplished.

Consideration 9. *The excesses of our grief should be restrained by the hope of the resurrection.* Let those mourn without measure who mourn without hope. The husbandman does not mourn when he casts his seed into the ground. He expects to receive it again, and more. The same hope have we, respecting our friends who have died in faith. "I would not have you ignorant," says Paul, "concerning them who are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others who have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." He seems to say, "Look not on the dead as lost. They are not annihilated. Indeed, they are not *dead*. They only sleep; and they sleep to awake again." You do not lament over your children, or friends, while slumbering on their beds. Consider death as a longer sleep, from which they shall certainly awake.

Even a heathen philosopher could say that he enjoyed his friends expecting to part with them; and

parted with them expecting to receive them again. And shall a heathen excel a Christian in bearing affliction with cheerfulness?—If you have a well-grounded hope that your deceased friend was interested in Christ, ponder, I entreat you, the precious supports afforded by the doctrine of the Resurrection.

1. The *same body*, which was so pleasant to your eyes, shall be restored. "*My* eyes shall behold him," says Job, "and *not another*." The same body which you commit to the grave, shall be restored at the resurrection. Yes, mourning believer, you shall again meet the beloved form of the husband, the wife, the child, the friend, whom you now lament.

2. You shall *know* them to be the same objects, which were once so dear. You will love them, indeed, not as now, but with a purer and more enlarged affection. Yet among the immense multitude, you will be able to distinguish your parent, husband, wife, or child; and to say, This was the one for whom I wept and prayed; to whose spiritual good I was instrumental, or who was an instrument of salvation to me. The apostle Paul comforts himself with the thought that the Thessalonians whom he had converted to Christ, would be his "joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming." This implies, that in the great day he would have a distinct knowledge of them. Indeed, reason and Scripture bid us believe that whatever knowledge tends to perfect our nature, or increase our felicity, will be found in the heavenly state.

3. We shall find our pious friends in heaven unspeakably more lovely and desirable than ever before. Here they had their infirmities, natural and moral. In heaven, these will be for ever unknown. No natural infirmities will attend their glorified bodies; no sin their perfected spirits. O how lovely will their very bodies appear, when that which is *sown in dishonour* shall be *raised in glory*.

4. You will never part with them again. "The children of the resurrection can die no more." Never

more will you kiss the pale lips of your Christian friends, nor fear another agonizing separation; but, together with them, you *will be with the Lord for ever.* What balm does this declaration of the apostle distil into the bleeding heart of friendship! Well might he add, Comfort one another with these words.

Consideration 10. *All who die in Christ have an immediate admission to heavenly glory.* Some have departed in the lively exercise of faith and hope, and left the most satisfying evidence of their interest in Christ. Even had they died in silence, the general and known tenor of their lives would have been ample testimony in their favour.

The work of Divine grace is begun in the hearts of some at a very early period of life. Many, when making a public profession of their faith in Christ, have referred to the religious instructions of the nursery as deeply affecting their minds, and, as they hoped, blessed by the Holy Spirit, to their conversion. Even "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," God can "perfect praise." Parents who have evidence that their children died in the Lord have reason to rejoice in view of their departure.

Surely there is no Christian who would not rejoice to see his child outstrip him in grace. Why should we not rejoice as much to have our children arrive first at glory? Shall we mourn that they are gone to heaven before us? Might they not say to us, in such a case, as Christ to his dejected disciples: "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father." We profess much love to our children and friends; and if this love be pure and spiritual, can we grieve when they take leave of sin and sorrow, and go to a Father's house? Though we want their company, they want not ours. Christ has provided for them infinitely better than we could have done.

O parents! think what an honour to you, that Christ should take your children from your bosom, and put them in his own! That he should strip them of the garments of your own providing, and clothe them with

white robes, washed in his own blood! That he should make you instruments to furnish heirs for the heavenly inheritance, and replenish the mansions of everlasting light! Your child may be now glorifying God in a higher style than you can; and will you account that a loss to you which brings additional glory to God?

When Jacob heard that his favourite son was lord of Egypt, he rather wished himself with Joseph, than Joseph with him. And you, who are now tossing on a tumultuous sea, while your friend is in port, have more reason to wish yourself with him, than him with you.

Consideration 11. *All dissatisfaction and repining under the rod is utterly fruitless and vain.* The bullock, by wrestling and resistance, does but gall his neck, and render the yoke more painful. Be not like a *bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.* Excessive sorrow may break our sleep, or our hearts; but it can profit us nothing. David's conduct at the death of his child was at once rational and pious. "Now he is dead," said he, "wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again?" While God's purpose is unknown to us, there is room for fasting and prayer. But when it is manifest in the event, it is the extreme of folly to vex our spirits, as David's servants expected he would do, when informed of the death of the child. But though with many tears he had deprecated the affliction, yet when it came, "Wherefore," said he, "should I fast?" He felt, what every mourner should feel, that he could no more alter the purpose and providence of God, than he could change the seasons, or arrest the sun in its course. Let us not then waste our spirits and strength in a fruitless indulgence of grief.

Consideration 12. *If you meekly submit to the rod, the Lord may restore your lost comforts.* You have no reason to exclaim, with Esau, "Hast thou but one blessing, my father?" Your Father has many blessings to bestow. He is the *Father of mercies.* He can create as many mercies for you as he pleases. A few months or years since, the comforts whose loss you

now lament were not in existence; nor did you know whence they should come to you. But God spoke the word, and they were yours. And surely, he who gave is able to replace them, and more. But as you would hope for such mercy, beware that you do not dishonour and displease him by impatience.

God removed all Job's children by a single stroke; and many circumstances combined to aggravate the affliction. Yet from the Divine hand he meekly received, and patiently bore it. "Ye have heard," says an apostle, "of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord."—"The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." The number of his *children*, indeed, was not doubled, as his other comforts were. Yet perhaps his *comfort* in this regard was doubled.* Nothing was ever lost by a quiet submission to the will of God.

It is as easy for God to revive as to extinguish our enjoyments. "Thou wilt light my candle," says David; "the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." Every comfort we enjoy is a candle, lighted by a kind Providence to cheer us in the path of life. These candles will not always last. Those which endure longest will soon be wasted. Often, before they are half consumed, they are suddenly extinguished, and we are left in darkness. But let us remember, with David, that he who extinguishes our candle can light it up again. The Lord can banish our troubles, and renew our comforts.—Hannah waited on God for the blessing of children; and she was graciously remembered. We can lose no comfort, but God can restore it, and double it, if he sees best.

Consideration 13. *Though God should deny you such comforts as you have lost, he can bestow blessings incomparably greater.* "I will give them," says Jehovah, "a name better than of sons and of daughters. I will

* Some suppose that Job's receiving only the same number of children as formerly, while his other comforts were doubled in number, was designed to intimate to him that his first children were not extinct, but only removed to another world. In this view, *their* number was doubled too.

give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." To be a child of God is a source of greater honour and comfort than ever a parent enjoyed in the best and most beloved of children.

Yes, dejected mourner, bereft as you seem of all joy, you have no reason for despondence. Oh that you realized what blessings God has to bestow on those who submissively wait on him in their affliction! He has consolations far transcending the joy of children. So others have found. An eminently pious man, having lost an only son, retired for some hours to his closet, and then came forth with such a cheerful countenance, that all who saw him were filled with surprise. Being asked an explanation of this, he replied, that he had enjoyed, in his retirement, that which, if renewed, might well reconcile him to part with a son every day. Oh, how great the disproportion between the light of God's countenance, and the best, the sweetest of created enjoyments!

Sometimes God mercifully prepares his people for peculiar trials, by granting them previously some remarkable manifestations of his love. The writer of this knew a most amiable woman, who for several days before the death of her husband was so favoured with the presence of God, and the assurances of his love, that when the stroke came she was scarcely sensible of it; so entirely was she transported above every thing earthly. Yet her attachment was of the tenderest kind, as well as the object every way worthy; and she herself believed, that but for these extraordinary supports, she must have sunk under the burden of grief.

A husband, a wife, or child is a dear object. But what is a husband, a wife, or child, compared with the all-sufficient and everlasting God? And how know you but he has withdrawn your earthly comforts, to prepare the way for heavenly blessings? He may have removed your child, that he may make room for the more abundant communication of *himself* and his love to your souls.

Consideration 14. *By indulging excessive grief you give advantage to the adversary.* All extremes are dangerous; and there is an extreme of dejection, which invites the assaults of the tempter. That fallen spirit, equally cruel and cowardly, attacks the people of God when they are oppressed and sunk. He wished the Most High to smite Job in his estate, his children, and his person, because he hoped this would give him an advantage to poison his mind with blasphemous thoughts. "Do this, and he will curse thee to thy face."

Sometimes Satan excites in the afflicted soul *desponding* thoughts. "My hope," says the afflicted prophet, "is perished from the Lord." Sometimes he suggests *hard* thoughts of the divine conduct; and the sufferer is led to imagine his afflictions to be without a parallel. Sometimes he infuses *murmuring* thoughts, and sometimes those which are *atheistical*. "Verily," says the Psalmist, "I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence."

Thus Satan obtains advantage over the afflicted Christian. For though these things are his grief and burden, and therefore will not be imputed for his condemnation, yet they rob him of peace, and obstruct him in duty. They cause him to misimprove his affliction, and to harden others in sin. Beware, then, lest by excessive sorrow you *give place to the devil.*

Consideration 15. *By inordinate grief you dishonour God and religion.* In the time of trouble, many eyes are upon you. Atheists and scoffers, says one, when they see a suffering Christian, are apt scornfully to ask, Where is your God? What then will they say, should they hear you unbelievingly cry, Where is our God? Will they not exultingly exclaim, This is their boasted religion! what can it do for them in their extremity? Where now are the rich and precious promises of which they have talked? If they have a treasure in heaven, why are they so dejected and unhappy?

Oh Christians! the world have eyes as well as ears. If your deportment in trouble is like their own, they will think the same of your principles. Whatever you

may talk of God and heaven, if your grief for the loss of worldly comforts is as great as theirs, they will believe your hearts are supremely devoted to the same objects as theirs. Thus, too, the precepts of your Saviour respecting contentment in all conditions will be viewed as mere speculations, impossible to be reduced to practice. Indeed, the gospel at large will be disesteemed, as little calculated to influence the mind, or comfort the heart.

Endeavour, then, to convince the world that religion makes a real and essential difference between man and man; and that it consists, not in empty speculation, or a little outward strictness, but in humility, meekness, superiority to the world, and heavenly-mindedness. And let these graces display themselves in your submissive and cheerful deportment under trials. Why has God implanted these graces in your hearts, but that he may have the honour and you the benefit of them, in the time of your trouble? Should these be suppressed, and nothing but pride, passion, and earthliness of mind be manifested amid your afflictions, Oh, how will you wound religion, and dishonour the glorious name by which you are called! This thought must pierce a gracious heart deeper than any outward calamity.

Consideration 16. *You know not how many mercies are imbosomed in this affliction.* The children of God have often found their severest trials their richest blessings. This would be still more frequently the case, were they more careful to improve those trials. David could say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." May not affliction be as good for you as for David? It will, if, like his, it be sanctified. You needed this rod. Perhaps you saw the need of some awakening providence. If not, the Lord did. He did not smite you till faithfulness and love required it.

You incessantly deplore your loss. Every recollection of the dear departed object fills your heart with grief, and your eyes with tears. All this proves that the affliction was needful. For does it not emphatically

declare that your attachment was extreme, and that the friend you have lost had a wrong place in your heart? And should God leave you thus? Should he permit this earthly object to engross your affections, and steal away your heart from himself? This he could not do, and love you. The greater your impatience under affliction, the greater your need of it. What if, by this stroke, God should awaken you from your pleasant but perilous slumber—pillowed as you were upon this idolized creature. Were not this better, far better, than for him to say, "Let him sleep on. He is joined to idols: let him alone. He has left the fountain; let him continue at the broken cistern."

What if God should now so effectually discover to you the vanity of every created enjoyment, as that never more your heart and hopes shall fasten on them as before? Formerly you talked of the vanity of creatures. Now you *see* it, you *feel* it. Is not this mercy indeed!—to be cured of your false and dangerous expectations from creatures; to have your judgment of them rectified, and your affections to them moderated; to have your wandering heart reclaimed to your God, your lost communion with him restored, your neglected duties revived? These are greater mercies than to have your friend again. Surely you will, in time, and to eternity, adore the hand which has removed the obstructions between you and your God. Now you can pray more constantly, more affectionately, more spiritually than before. Blessed rod, which buds and blossoms with such fruits as these!

Consideration 17. *Your affliction, severe as it may seem, is light, compared with what others have known.* Your dear relative is dead. It is, however, but a single death; and probably in the ordinary way. Others have lost many friends at once; and by violent, perhaps cruel deaths. The unhappy Zedekiah had his children slain before his eyes; and then had those eyes (alas, too late!) put out. A family in Germany were once reduced to such extremity by famine, that the wretched

parents were compelled to think of selling one of their children for bread to sustain themselves and the rest. But attempting to designate the victim, they shrunk from the impossible task, and determined to meet death altogether. Contemplate that picture of horror, Lam. iv. 10, "The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children."

But it is needless to resort to scenes like these. Many parents, and some pious parents, have seen their children die awfully stupid; perhaps even profane; and sometimes by the hand of public justice. Most who read this are unacquainted with such heart-rending afflictions. Instead, therefore, of complaining, they have reason to be thankful, and to adore the sovereignty which has so mercifully distinguished them.

Consideration 18. *If God be your God, you can sustain no real loss by the removal of a creature.* God is the fountain of all true comfort. Creatures are but streams which convey the consolations he is pleased to impart. If some of these streams be cut off, he can bless us through another medium. And he can bless us without a medium. In this case we lose nothing. No comforts are so sweet as those which flow directly from the fountain. Is the fulness of the fountain yours, and will you despond because the broken *cistern* is removed? The best of creatures are no better Cisterns have nothing but what they receive; and broken cisterns cannot hold what they receive. Why then do you mourn, as if all happiness were gone? You still have free access to the fountain. If God never restore the comfort you have lost, he can more than compensate it in himself. And is not one glimpse of his countenance, one manifestation of his special love, a sweeter and more substantial comfort than all the world can afford? Repair then to the fountain. Though creatures fail, God is unchangeable, and all-sufficient still.

Consideration 19. *Afflictions often tend to render death more easy.* Many pious persons have been embarrassed on a dying bed by their affection and anxiety

for those they must leave behind. Had not God removed your relatives beforehand, your love to them might have caused you very unduly to cling to life. For these are the things that make men loath to die. It is much easier to think of going to our friends in heaven, than of leaving them behind us on earth. The thought of leaving those we most tenderly love in a deceitful, dangerous world, perhaps to want and distress, is painful, and almost distracting.

True, it is our duty to commit our fatherless children and fatherly relatives to God. And some have been enabled cheerfully to do this on a dying bed. Luther could say, "Lord, thou hast given me a wife and children. I have little to leave them. Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widow, do thou nourish, teach, and keep them." But every Christian has not Luther's faith. Those then whose dearest friends have gone before them are in some respects privileged. As their ties to earth are weakened, they may hope to find it less difficult to die.

Consideration 20. *You are rapidly approaching that state where all these sorrows will be unknown.* We now live partly by faith, and partly by sense; partly on God, and partly on the creature. Soon God will be all in all; and we shall be as the angels, who neither marry nor are given in marriage. Our sins and our sufferings will cease together. Our glorified relations will live with us for ever. They will complain no more. They will die no more. With them, we shall surround the throne of God, and drink at the fountain of immortal felicity. All sorrow will be swallowed up in endless joy. And, Oh Christian, this blessedness is near. Let the thought console your afflictions, and becalm your perturbed minds.

III. I am now to *consider and refute the pleas* of immoderate grief. It is natural for men, and even for Christians, to justify, at least to palliate, such excessive sorrow. But it is important to all to see that it admits no apology. This point I shall illustrate, chiefly in reference to bereaved parents, because this is the case

presented in the text. But the thoughts I shall suggest, will generally apply to bereavements at large.

Plea 1. "My child was a child of many prayers; a Samuel, asked of the Lord; and, as I hoped, given in *answer* to prayer. But now, I fear it was *not* bestowed in special mercy. My child is dead, and my prayers seem shut out."

Answer. Unless you prayed for children *submissively*, you were wrong. You ought not to limit the Holy One, nor prescribe, nor make terms with him. If you did, you are now justly rebuked. But if you prayed conditionally and submissively, referring both the bestowment and continuance of the mercy supplicated to the Divine wisdom and will, then there is nothing in the death of the child contrary to the spirit and intent of your prayer.

Further; your prayers may be answered, though the blessing asked be withheld, or speedily withdrawn. There are four ways in which God answers prayer. He may immediately bestow the blessing supplicated. Dan. ix. 23. He may impart it after considerable delay. Luke xviii. 7. He may withhold the mercy asked, and bestow a greater. Deut. iii. 25, compare Deut. xxiv. 4, 5. Or he may give patience to support the loss or want of it. 2 Cor. xii. 9. If God has taken away your child, or friend, and given you a meek, quiet, submissive spirit, you need not suspect that he has *shut out your prayer.*

Plea 2. "Mine is no common loss. My child was singularly beautiful, lovely, and desirable."

Answer. Beauty in children or relations, though a good gift, is a common, not a special mercy. It is short-lived and vanishing, and often has proved a snare. The souls of some had been more beautiful had their persons been less so. And what has all mortal beauty to compare with the beauty of the saints, in that day when they shall shine forth as the sun in their Father's kingdom? If your child or friend sleeps in Jesus, he will appear ten thousand times more lovely in the morning of the resurrection, than ever before.

Besides, the more lovely and engaging the object removed, the more signal and amiable will be your submission, if you cheerfully resign it. Had it been a thousand times more sweet and engaging, it would not have been too good to give to your God. Now, then, let it be seen that your obedience to his will can conquer the strongest of natural affections; and that you consider patience and resignation as more desirable than the sweetest of earthly enjoyments. If, like Abraham, you can give up a child inexpressibly beloved, to God incomparably *more* beloved, you will have a comfortable evidence of your sincerity.

Plea 3. "Had I enjoyed my child longer, I could more easily have resigned it. But death nipped it in the bud; and my expectations were raised only to be disappointed."

Answer. If it died in Christ, its life was sufficiently protracted. The conflict is long enough, if the victory be secured. The shorter the life of your child, the less sin was committed, and the less sorrow endured. Sin and sorrow fill the world. A quick passage through such a world is a special privilege. That parting would have been easier after a longer enjoyment is a mistake. The reverse is true. A tender plant may be easily plucked up; but let it spread and fasten its roots for years, and how hard to remove it! Such are our affections to children and friends. Above all, this thought should tranquillize your mind: your child was removed in God's time; and that time is always fittest and best.

Plea 4. "In losing one, I have lost all. Had I other children, this privation had been less afflictive. But now it is insupportable."

Answer. Religion does not permit us to say of our deceased friends, that they are *lost.* They are only *gone before.* Nor can a Christian say he has lost all in one, except that one be Christ; and him he can never lose. Doubtless you mean that you are deprived of all your comfort *of this kind.* And what if you are? Do there not still remain to you multitudes of comforts,

more precious, more excellent, more durable? Is your portion in this life? Have you not a God who can more than supply the loss of the most beloved of creatures?

Plea 5. "I am not only stripped, but have no hope of seeing another child. My comfort in children is gone for ever."

Answer. Bless God that you have better mercies, and higher hopes, than children. Peruse the promise, Isa. lvi. 4, 5. And further, if God denies you comfort from children, resolve to draw your comfort more entirely from himself. You will be no loser by the exchange. In one hour's communion with God, you will find an enjoyment which the happiest of parents never found in children.

Plea 6. "My bereavement was sudden and unexpected. My beloved relative was taken without the least warning."

Answer. You could not be ignorant that your relatives were frail dying creatures. And it was your duty to live in habitual expectation of the parting stroke. You likewise saw other parents, husbands, and wives conveying their dead to their long home: and what were these but warnings to you?

Further; what you consider the sting of your affliction others would have regarded as a favour. They have witnessed with agony the gradual and most distressing approaches of death to their sick friends. Some of the tenderest of parents and friends have even been compelled to implore, upon their knees, that the parting moment might be hastened, and an end put to pains and sufferings more terrible than death.

Plea 7. "I neglected the proper means and precautions for preserving life. I have reason to apprehend that, but for this negligence and inconsideration, my relative might have been living; and this is inexpressibly grievous."

Answer. It is wrong to neglect means; and it is wrong to ascribe too much to them. The best of them are utterly fruitless without God's blessing. When his

appointed time was come, this blessing was withheld; and that it had come in the present case is manifest from the event. This consideration should quiet your mind, now the event is known; though, while it was uncertain, it should not have prevented any exertions.

But do you not charge yourself unjustly? It may be you doubted what course to pursue. Having observed many to die under the hands of physicians, and many to recover without them; or not thinking the present case hazardous, you omitted to call them. Or among various courses prescribed, you preferred that which you now think the least proper. Yet you followed the best light you had. In either case, you have no reason for severe reflections on yourself. Because the event is unfavourable, to be vexed that you pursued the dictates of your judgment is to be vexed that you are not omniscient. For none but the omniscient can foresee future events.

Again; seasons of affliction are apt to be seasons of temptation. The adversary then frequently charges us with sins of which we are not guilty; and frequently magnifies our mistakes into sins. Indeed, had yours been a voluntary neglect,—had you preferred hazarding the life of your friend to parting with a little money, you would have much reason to reproach yourself; for great would have been your guilt. But probably this was not the case; and if so, your vexation is unreasonable and wrong.

Plea 8. "Were I assured that the deceased friend, or child, is with Christ, I should be quiet. But alas! I fear the contrary; and the very thought is overwhelming."

Answer. Admit that you have real ground of fear. It is a distressing case indeed; and to a pious heart almost overwhelming. Still, you can have no reason to murmur against the dispensations of God. Consider his adorable sovereignty over the souls which he has made. *Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?* What if the Lord does not see fit to bestow his special mercies on those most dear to us? Is there

any wrong done to them, or to us? Aaron had the unutterable distress to see his two sons cut off by God's immediate hand, and in the very act of sin. Yet *Aaron held his peace.* God plainly signified to Abraham that the covenant should not be established with Ishmael, for whom he so earnestly prayed. And though he probably concluded that there was no salvation out of the covenant, yet he piously acquiesced.

Consider, further, God's distinguishing love and mercy to you. What thanks do you owe that root and branch have not been cast together into the fire? What thanks that the Lord has given you good hope, through grace, that it shall be well with you to eternity. Let the thought fill you with grateful astonishment, and awe you into a holy, trembling submission to the inscrutable decree of Heaven.

But further; examine the ground of your fear. There may be less reason for it than you apprehend. Perhaps your child died in infancy. As to infants at large, we may safely leave them in the hands of a Being infinite in justice, infinite in mercy.

Perhaps your child had passed infancy; but did not exhibit, in life or death, that decisive evidence of grace which you wished. Yet if his mind was tender, and his deportment exemplary,—if he escaped the pollutions of the world, and made conscience of sin and duty, you have reason to be thankful. There may have been found in him, as in young Abijah, *some good thing towards the Lord.* A natural modesty and reserve may have led him to conceal from you some things which, had they been known, would have convinced you of his piety. If there was the faintest spark of grace in his bosom, it was not overlooked by him who *despiseth not the day of small things.*

But however this may be, he is now beyond your reach. He is gone to an omniscient, righteous, and merciful Judge. Your duty lies, not in indulging *curious* or *anxious* inquiries respecting his state, but in improving the bereavement to the glory of God, and your own spiritual good.

Plea 9. "I fear this visitation is a special punishment for my sin, in idolizing the object withdrawn; at least, in not loving it so spiritually as I ought."

Answer. If your love was not spiritual and pure (a sin too common, even among Christians), you have reason for humiliation, but not for despondence. Perhaps your conscience, now particularly tender, paints your guilt in its strongest colours. But admit what you apprehend,—that God has afflicted you for your sin, and removed the comfort because it was idolized; you have no reason to sink under the affliction. This may be in love to your soul. "As many as I love," says he, "I rebuke and chasten." How much better, that God should remove your idolized enjoyment, than that he should say of you, as of Ephraim, "He is joined to idols: let him alone." How much better to be chastened than to be cast off for ever.

Plea 10. "I hoped to have left to my beloved children the fruits of my cares and toils. But I am disappointed: and all my worldly possessions can afford me no comfort."

Answer. Many of your acquaintance are destitute both of children and wealth. If, though deprived of one, you are indulged the other, you have far greater reason for gratitude than for discontent. Consider, too, though *you* have no children, *God* has many children in the world, whom your wealth may comfort and refresh. And doubtless your charity to them will turn to greater account, than leaving a great estate to your posterity. Surely we were not sent into this world to amass great estates for our children. If you have too eagerly pursued this object, your folly is justly rebuked. Bless God that you have yet an opportunity to *honour him* eminently *with your substance.* And since other executors are denied, let your own hands distribute to the necessities of the saints. So shall the blessing of those who are ready to perish come upon you.

Plea 11. "The pleasant words and actions of my departed child are constantly recurring to memory, and wounding my heart anew."

Answer. That you were blessed with so desirable a child claims your gratitude. How many parents have been afflicted with children destitute of reason and common sense! How many children, through a perverse temper, have been the vexation and torment of those who gave them birth! Besides, the circumstances mentioned, though engaging, are in themselves of small importance. Yet to you they will prove serious evils, if instrumental of depressing or imbittering your spirit. At this serious moment, greater things claim your attention. You ought to be engaged in inquiring for the design of your afflictions, in mortifying the sins which have procured them, and in subjecting your heart to the Divine will.

Plea 12. "I am not only afflicted, but deserted. In the time of my trouble, the Lord has hidden his face from me."

Answer. You may want sensible comfort, and still have his gracious supports. The light of God's countenance may be withdrawn, yet the everlasting arms may be underneath you. Nor is it an unusual thing for God to hide his face at such a time. This has been the experience, not only of his dearest saints, but of his beloved Son, who, at a period when most of all he wanted his Father's presence, was constrained to exclaim, in agony of soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Inquire, likewise, may not your want of submission provoke God to hide his face? This is but too probable. The comforting Spirit cannot rest in that bosom which is the seat of unsubdued and tumultuous passions. Would you enjoy his cheering smiles? Meekly receive and drink the cup which your heavenly Father has mingled. Accept the punishment of your iniquity. Say from the heart, and with unaffected submission, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

IV. I am now, in the LAST place, to *point out the remedy* of immoderate sorrow. Much, indeed, has been said already to dissuade from this evil. Yet it

may be of additional advantage to suggest the following rules.

Rule 1. *If you would not excessively lament the loss of created comforts, guard against loving them inordinately, while in your possession.* The apostle unites *temperance* and *patience* in the precept, 1 Pet. i. 1. The affection of Jacob for Joseph was doubtless excessive. The consequence was, that when the favourite was supposed to be dead, the fond father refused to be comforted, and resolved to *go down to the grave to his son, mourning.* Behold, Christians, the consequence of inordinate affection; and as you would avoid the sad effect, beware of the *cause.*

Rule 2. *Faithfully perform your duties to your relatives, while you have them.* The consciousness of this will do much to allay your sorrows, when they are yours no longer. But conscious guilt adds a sting to affliction. How terrible to look on a deceased friend, to whom, while living, we have been unfaithful, perhaps unkind! As you would part comfortably with friends at death, and meet them comfortably at judgment, be faithful in the discharge of all relative duties.

Rule 3. *Pour out your sorrows into the bosom of God.* What a privilege is prayer to the Christian at all times, but especially in seasons of distress! It is a relief to deposite our sorrows in the bosom of a wife or a friend. How much more to leave our complaints with a compassionate and faithful God! Go then, Christian, in the cloudy and dark day; retire from all creatures, and pour out your heart to your heavenly Father. Confess your sins; justify God in his severest chastisements; entreat the support of his everlasting arms; implore his smiles to cheer your drooping spirit. Thus you may hope to find the best relief, the sweetest consolation.

Rule 4. *In your affliction, eye God more, and secondary causes less.* "I was dumb," says David, "I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." In your affliction, and in all its circumstances, consider the hand of God. 1. As a *sovereign* hand. He has a perfect

right to dispose of you, and of all your comforts: and this without explaining the reasons of his conduct. Job xxxiii. 13. 2. As a *Father's* hand, correcting in love and faithfulness. Prov. iii. 12. If the affliction draws your heart to God, and divorces it from the world, surely it is a kind affliction. If it issues in your love to God, doubt not it proceeds from God's love to you. 3. As a *righteous* hand. Surely God has done you no wrong. Must you not confess, that all you suffer is the fruit of sin? 4. As a *tender*, *merciful* hand, inflicting less than your iniquities deserve. He has cast you into the furnace of affliction; and might he not justly have cast you into the pit of despair? *It is of the Lord's mercies that you are not consumed. Why should a living man complain?*

Rule 5. *Compare your afflictions with those of others.* Say not, there is no sorrow like your sorrow. You have lost one child; but Aaron lost two, and Job all; and lost them by an immediate, instantaneous stroke of God. The children of some pious parents have died victims to public justice. Others have lived to sin so grievously that their broken-hearted parents were ready to wish they had died from the womb! A third class have experienced such protracted and intolerable sufferings on a sick-bed, that even a fond mother has wished and prayed for the closing moment. O think of these things, and acknowledge that your lot has been comparatively merciful.

Rule 6. *Avoid whatever tends to renew your grief, and excite your impatience.* Do not increase your sorrow by the sight of melancholy objects, or by conversing about them. Thus you will avoid some of the principal means by which the adversary excites the corruptions of the heart. Where there is so much of the *inflammable*, you cannot too solicitously shun the approach of every spark.

Rule 7. *Remember that you will soon, very soon, follow the friend you have lost.* "I shall go to him," says David, in reference to his deceased child. When we forget our mortality, the loss of our earthly comforts

seems insupportable. When we feel that "time is short," we learn to "weep as though we wept not." When we look into our own graves, we can look with composure into the graves of our friends.

And now, may the Father of mercies, the God who comforteth the mourners, write these truths in your hearts, to your present consolation, and your everlasting joy. Amen.

THE CONFLICT AND TRIUMPH OF A CHRISTIAN.

BY THE REV. S. W. CUNNINGHAM, A.M.

"Beyond this vale of tears,
There is a life above;
Unmeasur'd by the flight of years,
And all that life is love."

REVELATION iii. 12.—*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is in New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name.*

IT is often our duty, in order to obtain a more familiar acquaintance with the habits and dispositions of the true servant of God, to follow him through the various stages of his earthly pilgrimage. But these are not the only circumstances in which we are allowed to contemplate his course. It is our privilege, and a privilege of the highest value, in those moments especially when the heart is in danger of fainting under the trials of life, to follow the servant of the Redeemer from earth to heaven; to enter with him, as far as the light of Scripture will enable us, behind the veil, and survey the regions of his rest and glory. Such is my wish on the present occasion. And, in order to approach this lofty contemplation in a suitable frame of mind, let us

earnestly supplicate the presence and aid of that Spirit who alone "can take of Christ, and show them" to the soul.

It is my intention to consider,—I. The qualifications for heaven insisted upon in the text: and,

II. The promises to those possessed of this qualification.

I. We are to consider *the qualification insisted upon in the text.* It is stated in that single expression, "Him that overcometh."

In the first place, the term evidently implies a struggle and conflict. It cannot, even in the lowest sense of the word, be affirmed of an individual, that he "overcomes," who does not "harness himself for the battle," or enter into the fight. Every part of Scripture accordingly, calls the servant of God to a contest, full of danger, with inward corruption and outward trial. He is to "endure hardness, as the good soldier of Jesus Christ." He is to remember that he fights, not merely "with flesh and blood," but "with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places." And, in order to meet the exigencies of such a struggle, he is to "put on the whole armour of God." A considerable portion of a whole epistle is employed in describing the Christian hero thus arming for the battle, and going forth under the banner of the cross, to the contest with his spiritual enemies. And great must be his misconception of the corruptions of his own heart, of the demands of Scripture, and of the number and malignity of his spiritual enemies, who does not discover the severity of this contest, and his need of this armour. You who inherit the promises of the text, must beware of casting yourselves into the lap of sloth and indulgence. You have much to accomplish, and but a little interval in which to accomplish it. The trump of the gospel has sounded to arms, and you are to quit the camp, to go forth, and give battle to the enemy. "Wo to them that are at ease in Zion."

2. But again, the term "overcometh" implies daily advancement and success. The Christian is a man

not merely contending, but *successfully* contending. He has not only entered on the enemy's country, but is daily gaining new victories over him. To this effect are the injunctions and declarations of the apostle: "Fight the good fight of faith:" "Lay hold on eternal life:" "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our God and Saviour." If, therefore, the text describes your case, you are not to be found as the soldier on parade, continually treading the same ground; but as a soldier on the march, or in the field, making the outposts of yesterday the trench of to-day, and hurrying onward till the inmost citadel is won. "There is yet much land," said Joshua to his lingering countrymen, "to be possessed in Israel." Many streams were to be forded, many mountains to be scaled, and many fair and fertile regions to be added to the territory of the people of God. And thus should we still say to the lingering and halting soldiers of the cross: Much land is yet to be possessed in Israel; many tempers are to be subdued, many lusts bridled, many appetites quenched. A fair and fertile region, a land of green pastures and still waters, stretches before you, and invites you to go forward. As yet, perhaps, you know comparatively little of the pleasures of religion, of the "light sown for the righteous," and "the gladness of the upright in heart;" of the "lively hope" to which the Christian is "begotten again by the resurrection of his Lord from the dead;" of the "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." You are not yet able to say, "I will go unto the altar of God; unto God, my exceeding joy;" "I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy;" "Believing, we rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "How long," then, I would ask with the leader of the Jews, "How long are ye slack to go in to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?" The soldiers of the Lord must go forward, till, having subdued every enemy in one world, they rise on angels' wings, to possess themselves of the glories of another.

3. But a third feature of the man who "overcometh"

is *perseverance*. His religion is not the mere meteor of the moment, extinguished almost as soon as kindled. Herod for a time heard John gladly; Felix trembled; the apostate Demas followed for a season in the train of the true servants of the Redeemer. But religion demands something more than this transient service. How explicit is the language of Scripture! "Be ye followers of them who through faith and *patience* inherit the promises;" "He that endureth to the end, shall be saved;" "Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." *Perseverance* may be called the last and best triumph of grace in the soul. It is not perhaps in the infancy of religion, when it comes to us in all the bloom and freshness of novelty—in that spring-time of our spiritual existence, when the flowers of hope and joy are often scattered so richly over our path—it is not then, in every case at least, the course of the Christian is most difficult. It is, perhaps, when all that is pleasing to the natural man has vanished; when the novelty has passed away; when the voice of love and tenderness, which first cheered us on our way to Zion, is silent; when many prospects of usefulness have closed; when, perhaps, we have been made to feel that it is rather by suffering than doing we are to win our way to heaven; when our motives have been misrepresented, our principles traduced, and our zeal and love requited with neglect or scorn:—then it is that our religion is especially in danger of flagging, and the chilled and disappointed heart of growing "weary in well doing." But the man who finally overcometh, will, notwithstanding all this, persevere: he will set his face like a flint against corruption; will "resist, even unto blood, the contradiction of sinners" against the Master he loves; will be able to adopt something of the language of the apostle, "By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possess-

ing all things;" and again, "I count not my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus."

II. Let us then proceed to consider, secondly, the promises addressed in the text to the victorious servants of the Redeemer. "*Him that overcometh*," says our Lord, "*will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and will write upon him my new name.*"

1. In the first place, it is here said that the successful Christian shall be "*made a pillar in the temple of his God.*" The whole of the imagery in the text is probably borrowed from the practice, in ancient times, of erecting pillars in honour of the achievements of distinguished individuals, in or near their temples of false gods. In like manner, it is here said that the Christian shall be erected as a pillar of triumph in the temple of the true and living God. In this world, the servant of the Redeemer may be a mere outcast in society. He may toil, and want, and suffer; may "rise early" to eat "the bread of carefulness," and sink to rest upon the hard and rugged bed of poverty. Or he may wander with the poor Arab of the desert; or trample amid the snows of the pole; or linger out a dreary existence in the cheerless and sunless hut of the western savage. The gospel may, in short, find him in the lowest depths of want and suffering. Nevertheless, "he that overcometh shall be made a pillar in the temple of God." That poor outcast, if a true servant of Christ, shall be stripped of his rags and wretchedness, and be raised as a pillar of ornament in the temple of the Lord. Great, my Christian brethren, will be the changes and reverses of the last solemn day; "the first shall be last, and the last first." The wicked shall at once shrink to their proper nothingness; but the contrite and believing shall participate in the glories of their Lord. They shall be

planted in the temple of God. The "one thing they desire upon earth" shall be granted them; "they shall behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and dwell in his temple." They shall live in his presence—they shall hear his voice—they shall mingle their songs with the redeemed—they shall proclaim the glory of "the Crucified" for ever and ever—they shall "see the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off."

2. Again: it is said of the triumphant Christian in the text, "*he shall go no more out.*" In this world, my brethren, change and decay are stamped on every thing around us. Our choicest blessings are suspended on the most slender threads. The man this morning lifting to heaven a head lofty as the cedar, and spreading forth his green branches on every side, may ere night be struck by the fires of heaven, and lie blasted and lifeless on the plain. And even our spiritual joys partake in some measure of the same fluctuating character. How great, for instance, are apt to be the ebb and flow of the religious affections! How soon is the ardour of devotion chilled! How difficult is it to sustain the vigour of our first love! How does the body seem to hang upon the soul, and to chain it to earth when it is soaring to heaven! But the Christian, exalted to be a "pillar in the temple of his God," shall "go no more out." The sun of his joys shall never go down. The well-spring of his comforts shall never fail. The joys of one moment shall be the joys of eternity. Once lodged in the bosom of his Father, no force shall drag him from it. Inseparably united to God, he shall eternally participate in the pleasures which are at his right-hand. He shall "shine as a star in the firmament for ever and ever."

3. Again: it is said, "*I will write on him the name of my God.*" It was customary to write on the pillars of victory, to which we have already referred, the name of the false god in whose temple the pillar was erected. And thus, in the case of the Christian, the name of Jehovah, so dear to him on earth, shall be stamped on his forehead in heaven; "Ye shall see his face, and his

name shall be on your forehead." In this world, it is possible that the sincere Christian should be perplexed either by his own doubts or insinuations of others; but in heaven his acceptance and adoption will be no longer a disputable point. He shall be recognised by Him who has stamped him with his own name. He shall be owned also by myriads of happy spirits, who, beholding that sacred name, shall at once hail him as their brother and associate in all the occupations and joys of the region of light, and life, and glory.

4. Again: it is said of the triumphant Christian, "*I will write on him the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God.*" As it was usual to write on these pillars of triumph the name of the city of the conqueror; so on the pillars erected in heaven shall be engraven the name of that celestial city which afterward descended in vision before St. John, or which is here called "the New Jerusalem, which came down out of heaven from God." Even here, in this state of being, my brethren, it is "the city not made with hands" the Christian seeks: "we have here no continuing city; but we seek one to come,"—"the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And to that city he shall be exalted in heaven. Lift up your eyes, ye dejected children of God, and behold for a moment your future habitation, as it is displayed in the glowing picture of one who was permitted to gaze upon it. Behold "its walls of jasper," and its "foundations of precious stones;" the "glory of the Lord to lighten it, and the Lamb to be the light thereof;" its "river of life;" its "tree, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations." Behold it without any "curse," or "night," or "sorrow," or "crying," or "death." The life of this world, says the apostle to true servants of the Redeemer, "is not your life, for your life is hid with Christ in God." In like manner it may be said to the true Christian, The heritage of this world is not your heritage: you are born of a loftier destiny, you are citizens of a heavenly country; you are sent among us for a

time, to take a transient view of our prison-house to benefit us, and to learn more effectually yourselves, by contrast, the superiority of the world to come. The language of your Lord is, "In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you." And O! what motives for patience, and gratitude, and love does such a promise supply! What is it, my Christian brethren, to be straitened for a time by the narrowness of our mansion on earth, if such is the habitation purposed for us in heaven? Wait but a little moment, and, though it shall not be granted to you, as to St. John, to see in the flesh the descending vision of the "heavenly city," it shall be granted to you to behold it in still more favourable circumstances. He saw it indeed; but it was in a trance, and but for a moment, and he awoke to find himself a prisoner in the flesh, and an exile in Patmos. But in your case sight will be possession. You shall behold the city of God, to lose sight of it no more: you shall see it, to be welcomed as its citizen and its inhabitant for ever. You shall no sooner plant your foot in its golden streets, than your exile shall either be remembered no longer, or remembered merely to enhance the joys of deliverance. Your chains shall drop from you, and you shall walk abroad in all the glorious liberty of the children of God."

5. But it is added, finally, "*I will write upon him my new name.*" In other words, the same divine hand will stamp upon the triumphant servant of the cross the "new name" by which God hath last revealed himself to his creatures; that is, the name of Jesus—the Messiah—the Anointed One—"the Lord our Righteousness;"—or, as he is called in that magnificent description of the Son of God, in the nineteenth chapter of this book, the "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Yes, my Christian brethren, as it was customary to engrave on the pillar of worldly triumph the name of the leader under whom the soldier fought and conquered; so the Captain of your salvation, your Guide through all the intricacies of this valley of tears, your Leader in the

great conflict against the corruptions of the heart, the vanity of the world, and the assaults of the powers of darkness, shall stamp his own name on your forehead, and designate you as his children for ever. The name which has been your "strength and your joy" upon earth, shall be your shield and your glory for ever. And should the same Spirit, who communicated with St. John in that world of light, be asked by some new apostle, admitted, like his predecessor, to catch a glimpse of the glories to be revealed, "Who are those stamped with the name of the Redeemer?" he shall once more reply, "These are they who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

If the promises made to the church of God are thus lofty and valuable, let us beware of rashly laying claim to them. Carry this conviction, my brethren, habitually along with you, that if heaven is the world where these promises are to be enjoyed, this is the world where a title to them is to be obtained. If that is the region of triumph, this is the field of conflict. If pardon is to be gained through the blood and intercession of the Redeemer, it is to be gained here. If the heart is to be transformed, the temper to be subdued, and the whole man to be subjugated to the will of God, the change must be accomplished here. There is no intermediate world, no border country, measured out by the hand of the great Judge, in which you may shake off the corruption of the flesh and clothe yourself in the vesture of righteousness. Here it is that you must shed the tears of penitence, offer the prayer of faith, wash your sins in the blood of atonement, and acquire the taste, the habits, the qualifications which are to fit

you for the kingdom of God. But if this be true, what apology is to be found for the lives of thousands in society? Why this delay—this consumption of time on the follies and vices of life—this lingering upon doubtful ground—this incorporation with the world—this drowsiness in prayer, in the reading of the Scriptures, and in the use of every means of grace? "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, that Christ may give thee light."

And, finally, I would entreat you to call to mind what, as the expectants of this bright reversion and inheritors of these glorious promises, may be expected of you. Is such a "mansion," with all its seats of joy and triumph, prepared for you? Then why these looks and accents of disquietude amid the petty cares and distractions of life? Why this feverish thirst for worldly distinctions? Why this covetous grasp after worldly interests? Why this cowardly and shamefaced profession of the religion of the cross? All this "savours not of God," but of man—not of the "city which hath foundations," but of this poor, fugitive, sordid, fallen world. You lay claim to the promises of God; let us see that they are not wasted or dishonoured in your hands. You proclaim yourselves children of God; let it be felt that you are "crucified to the world and the world unto you." Oppose to the seductions of sense, to the follies of life, to those withering chaplets which alone the world can bind around your brow, the present delights of faith and hope, and communion with God and holy obedience to his will, and the future glories and triumphs of the assembly of the redeemed. Already are many "pillars" erected in the "temple of God." Already does it resound with the hallelujahs of the blessed. Remember your high and solemn vocation. "If you are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right-hand of God." Let your conversation be in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

LETTERS.

REV. JOHN NEWTON'S LETTERS.

Last night I preached from Job iii. 1–3: "He opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth." His losses and afflictions would not have made him speak thus, had not the Lord permitted Satan to assault him with no other limitation than not to take his life. When thus left to himself under the enemy's power, the evils of his heart broke out in bitter and rash complaints. The same evils are in my heart, and the similar change of circumstances would soon produce the like effects. But, blessed be the Lord, he does not permit Satan to rage so violently against me. Job's case, however, may teach us how precarious outward prosperity is. Let us pray that we may be watchful, and not lean too hard upon creature comforts, for we know not what a day may bring forth. But the same almighty, all-sufficient, compassionate Friend who supported Job, is with us also. The Lord knows our frame, and remembers we are but dust. He will either lay no more upon us than he sees we can bear; or if his wisdom sees fit to increase our burden, he will likewise give us increase of strength according to our day.

And now, as our great High-priest upon the throne, he has an experimental sympathy with his children. He knows what sore temptations mean, for he has felt the same. He pitied Job and bore with him: he pities and will bear with us; it is well for us that his patience and mercy are higher than the heavens. He not only brought Job through all his troubles, but justified him

from the unkind suspicions of his friends; did not even mention his former rash wishes, but made his latter end better than his beginning. Then, I suppose, Job did not rue the day of his birth. Lord, enable us to resign ourselves and our all into thy hands; since thou invitest us to cast all our care upon thee, and dost assure us, that thou carest for us! May we make thy word the ground of our hope, the rule of our conduct, and thy holy will the measure of our desires; and wait with faith, hope, and humble submission, for the appointed hour when thou wilt call us to our heavenly home! With this prospect in view, we may bless the Lord for our natural birth, since we have lived to be born again from above, and have thereby a taste (though, alas! faint) for the worship and company before the throne of glory. When all our sins and sorrows are left below, and earth is exchanged for heaven, what a blessed exchange will that be! I thank the Lord my health is good, though in my 77th year, and under a great and heartfelt trial. I often preach in public, and from house to house, six or seven times a week. I am a wonder to many, and ought to be still more so to myself. 1 Tim. i. 15.

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

* * * * * I would praise the Lord for the strength and support he afforded you under your late great trial. It is indeed a great trial to part with our dearest friends at any time: our gracious Lord did not reprove Mary and Martha for weeping when their brother died, but condescended to drop a tear of sympathy with them. He still sympathizes with his people, for he was once a man of sorrows for our sakes: see Heb. iv. 15, 16. However, when the Lord has declared his will by the event, it does not become us to

indulge grief, which is often hurtful to health and to our peace of mind. We should rather aim to praise the Lord for continuing our friends to us so long, than allow one repining thought for their leaving us, especially when we follow them in our thoughts, and see them by the eye of faith before the throne, and have a good hope that we in a short time shall rejoin them to part no more for ever. The Lord help you to find comfort in reflecting what a husband he was, and how long he was spared to you; what a blessing he was, not only to you and your children, but a public blessing to many in different parts of the kingdom; what a character he has left, and how many (more than you will ever know) are now weeping for his removal! Oh, how it would gladden my heart, and my dear child's (who joins in love to you and in prayer for you and yours), to see you once more. I hope the Lord will enable you and make you willing, in his own best time, to come to London. But if I am to be so indulged, you must come soon, for I may well say with Isaac, "Behold, I am old and know not the day of my death." He also was blind, and I am almost so. It is with great difficulty, and at many intervals, that I have written thus much, and I cannot now clearly see the tip of my pen. But I could write because it is to you. My dear child, though not yet perfectly well in health, is so far restored as to be a great comfort to me. What cause have I to praise the Lord for his goodness in supporting us in the darkest part of our great trial, and for the merciful mitigations with which he now favours us. He who has done so much can and will, in his own good time, do the rest. He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and in him I trust that he will deliver us. I can tell others what good reasons his people have to acquiesce in his dispensations, but, alas! I am a poor creature, and I often find it hard to practise my own lessons. We join in love to all your children, and to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord our Saviour give you peace always, and by all means in himself. We can expect it only in and from him.

Our life here is a state of conflict and warfare. But the time is short and the end is sure. We hope at last to be more than conquerors, through him who hath loved us.

I am, my dear Madam,
Your very affectionate and much obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

* * * * * I am often thankful that I was led to your house, and that I had the pleasure of seeing you in mine. The friendship commenced between us, I trust, will subsist and grow, though perhaps opportunities of personal intercourse will not be frequent; a union of hearts in grace is affected neither by absence nor local distance; a glance of thought conveys me to you whenever I please. The throne of grace is very near to you and to me, and if we often meet there, we cannot be far distant from each other. By-and-by, we hope to rejoice together before the throne of glory; there we shall be ever with the Lord, and with each other. May this thought animate us while we stay here. "We are not our own, we are bought with a price." There is but one thing worth living for; that we may live to him who died for us; that we may live to show forth his praise by obedience, by submission, by usefulness to others, in visiting the afflicted, assisting them by our sympathy, counsel, prayers, or purse, as the case requires, in supporting the cause of the gospel, and forwarding whatever bids fair for the good of society. These aims ought chiefly to engage our time, talents, and influence. Oh! what an honour to be the instruments of the Lord, in diffusing his benefits around us! to be the followers of him who went about doing good. * * *

How much does it behoove us to watch and pray for

grace, that we may be always prepared for the contingencies we may meet with in this present state! for who knows what a day or an hour may bring forth? In the midst of life we are in death; in the midst of apparent safety, we are always in danger. We indeed, if believers, are always safe under the Lord's protection, and immortal till our work is done, but we can perceive it would not be conducive to the life of faith if his people were visibly marked on the forehead to distinguish them from the world. A general exemption from such afflictions as are common to others would be equivalent to such a mark, therefore they are liable to the various calamities with which sin has filled the world. They are free from condemnation, but not from pain, sickness, poverty, losses, crosses, and sudden trying changes, and what we call premature death. These trials likewise give occasion for the exercise and manifestation of many graces which are not so visible in the sunshine of prosperity, and they are further sanctified to wean the people of God more from the world, and to weaken the body of sin which still dwelleth in them. On these accounts, for a time, in the Lord's providential appointments, all things seem to happen nearly alike to all. But even now, his people have supports and consolations in their troubles peculiar to themselves, and which strangers intermeddle not with; and hereafter, the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not, will be perfectly manifested.

All this I have written rather towards filling up the paper, than for your information. You have been enabled to count the cost and to choose your side; you are desirous and determined to be the Lord's, to be his on his own terms, to live upon his mercy, to build all your hopes upon the foundation he has laid, to expect all your supplies from the fountain which he has opened, to receive Christ Jesus the Lord as your Prophet, Priest, and King, to receive all from his hands, to do all for his sake. Go on, and be of good courage; he who has wrought in you to will, will also enable you to do ac-

cording to his good pleasure. But you must expect that your profession will be a warfare; we are encouraged to look forward to victory and triumph, but these terms of course imply a previous conflict; there would be no victory if there were no enemies to fight with.

May the Lord bless, guide, and guard you; make you happy in yourselves and each other, and useful in all your connexions:

So prays, dear Sir and Madam,

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR MADAM,

* * * * * I am almost six weeks in my seventieth year: it is time for me to think less of going about, and more of going home. I cannot now be far from my journey's end. May the good Lord help me and you also to praise him for what is past, and to trust him for what is to come. He appointeth the hour of our birth, and the hour of our dismission is with him likewise. Whether sooner or later, it will be just at the right time, if it finds us with our loins girt, and our lamps burning; and, if he who kindled them is pleased to supply us with fresh oil, neither the world, the flesh, nor the powers of darkness, shall be able to extinguish them; otherwise they must soon go out of themselves, for we have no stock of our own. But we need not put an *if* upon his faithfulness, provided we are sensible of our weakness, and wait upon him in those means by which he has promised to renew our strength.

Mr. Simeon preached for me last Wednesday, from Rev. v. 11th, 12th, and 13th verses. He spoke of the company, the object of their worship, and their song. I was going to say, as if he had just come down from

among them. I think he had a favoured peep within the veil: and there was such a visible impression on his hearers as is not common. Why are we not aiming to realize that scene, when we hope to join them soon, and likewise hope, that among the thousands and myriads which encompass the throne "day without night, rejoicing," there are some who were intimately near and dear to us? While they were upon earth we sympathized with them in their sorrows, and why not sympathize with them now in their joys? Oh! could we but see them as I believe they see us, it would greatly weaken our sense both of the bitters and the sweets of this poor life! but perhaps it would totally unfit us from attending to the duties of our station. The weakness of our mortal frame would not permit us to think of any thing but what we saw. This seems to have been the apostle's case (2 Cor. xii.); while he saw invisibles, and heard unutterables, he knew not whether he was in or out of the body. We are therefore at present to walk, not by sight, but by faith. But there is much attainable even here, which our unbelief keeps from us. It is comfortable to have a hope of heaven hereafter, but we should desire to have as much of heaven as possible while we are here; to resemble the angels who always do the will of the Lord, and behold his presence. What should we think valuable in this life but to live to him who died for us. We should consider what opportunities our situation, time, abilities, connexions, influence, and substance may afford us for promoting his service, and the good of our fellow-creatures; for verily we are debtors, and whatever is given is more properly intrusted to us, and we should employ them all for him, as good stewards of his manifold blessings; we should aim at the honour and pleasure of being useful, that we may experience the truth of our Lord's aphorism, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And if we obey with a single eye, and depend upon his grace with a single heart, he will surely favour us with a peace that passeth understanding, which will keep our hearts and minds composed

under all the changes we may pass through in our pilgrimage, and ere long we shall see him as he is, and be with him for ever.

I am, my dear Friend,
Your affectionate and obliged,
JOHN NEWTON.

REV. JOHN NEWTON TO A FRIEND.

MY DEAR SUFFERING FRIEND,

I heartily sympathize with you, and I feel your distress to part with such a comfortable wife, the companion many years of your travail and tribulation. How hard is it! What a struggle must have been between nature and grace, between affection to the creature, and submission to the creature's God! And now that she is gone, what must you still feel! When you lie down, and when you rise up; when you go out and come in; and when you sit down to every meal, still, still her place is empty. I think I can enter into your spirit, and take part in your heaviness and grief. But of what avail is the sympathy of friends, in comparison with his, who took our infirmities and bore our sickness? Wondrous grace! In all our afflictions, he is afflicted; and every member that suffers, our compassionate Head suffers with it! What a relief is this to me when thinking on Christian sufferers! I can do no more than pity and weep with them. But he, who is touched with the feeling of their infirmities, can effectually touch their hearts with a feeling of his consolations. Though he cause grief, yet has he compassion according to the multitude of his mercies; and when he takes away father or mother, wife or children, he will give of himself a hundredfold more, even in this life; whereby the poor soul is made to forget its poverty, and to remember its misery no more. O! may our glorious High-priest make you to feel his tenderness in this

holy quieting way! and let him come and sup with you, telling you that you are not alone, for he is with you, he will never leave you, nor forsake you. For my part, I cease not to pray, "Jehovah, hear him in the day of trouble, and let the name of the God of Jacob defend him. Let him send help from his sanctuary, and strengthen him out of Zion." How necessary is the smallest trial; but how much more, when the trial is so great? And the more necessary, the more certainly will it be bestowed; for he is that brother who was born for adversity; who, "because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, himself also took part of the same, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest." O! that our trust and affection towards him bore some proportion to his affection and faithfulness towards us! what should we not do? what should we not suffer at his will?

Upon the real or apprehended loss of friends, I feel in myself, what I suppose is too common, I feel my distress greatly aggravated by the foolish thought, that I am to live long behind them. Many years must I pass, many summers and winters, without these dear companions of my feeble steps. But, did I turn the thought the other way, saying they are gone before, and perhaps in a few months, or a few days, I shall follow them; how might this moderate my grief, and put me on the stretch to join them, and the general assembly and church of the first-born, who surround the throne of God and of the Lamb, who go no more out, but without wearying, serve him day and night in his temple. The time I hope shall come, when we shall meet never to part. Let me entreat you to take care of your health in your present circumstances.

Your affectionate and obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

REV. J. NEWTON TO A LADY IN AFFLICTION.

DEAR MADAM,

I know you have met with many afflictions and trials, and must continue to do so as long as you remain in a frail body and a sinful world; but remember this is part of our dear Lord's legacy, and as such the sure portion of all his faithful followers; hereby our communion and conformity to him are maintained, and if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. Take courage, madam, yet a little while, and this imperfect state of things shall cease; neither sin nor sorrow shall find place in the heavenly world, but God himself, whom we so imperfectly serve, shall honour us before men and angels, distinguish us with a crown of life and glory, and wipe away all tears for ever from our eyes. A few sighs and struggles more, and all things shall become new, death shall be swallowed in life, and conflict terminate in everlasting victory and triumph. At present the Lord's way in his dispensations to us is wrapt up often in clouds and darkness; we know not what he does nor whither his discipline tends, but we shall know hereafter; when the veil is taken away we shall see clearly that infinite wisdom and infinite love directed all our steps through this waste, howling wilderness; that no trial was unnecessary, nor any needful supply withheld. And even here, faith when in exercise may discern much of the goodness and expediency of the troubles we feel; all of them are little enough to wean us from a vain world, to quicken our desires after that kingdom which is prepared for us, and which all these things are preparing us for. Were it not for unbelief and self-will, we should find the most thorny paths of God's appointing to be paths of peace and pleasantness; and we should know that word is not in vain which commands us to be joyful in tribula-

tions. Are they not the effects and the tokens of God's special love, without which we should be destitute of one great evidence of our relation to him? and do they not concur to work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory? Heb. xii. 5–12; 2 Cor. iv. 17. Was Moses, Job, David, Jeremiah, Paul, nay, was Christ himself exempt from them? Is he not, on the contrary, described as eminently a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs? Was not his whole life, from the cradle to the cross, a continual series of sufferings? and did he not suffer for this among other ends, to sanctify and sweeten our sufferings, to take out the sting and change the very nature of affliction? Let us not then be cast down, let us not even complain, but rather pray to be armed with the like mind, that we may resolutely take up and glory in our cross. The time is short; from whence the apostle infers, let those who weep be as though they wept not. Has God pardoned our sins, given us his word, his grace, his Son, his Spirit, his salvation? Has he promised to be with us in trouble, and in his good time to deliver us out of it? Has he told us that the hairs of our head are all numbered; that his everlasting arms are around us, and his eye and his heart continually upon us? Let us therefore say with the psalmist, "We will not fear, though the earth be removed and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea." Let us resolve with the prophet to rejoice in God, though every creature-comfort should fail, and every favourable appearance be withdrawn; for the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that put their trust in him. * * * * * *

Please to give our love to S. She has the best advice I can give, but the Lord alone can comfort and instruct to purpose. I think of her, I pray for her, and I trust he will in good time grant her deliverance; if not to make her very happy in life, yet to give her a comfortable dismission out of it, and an abundant entrance into his kingdom of joy and peace. There, I trust, we shall all meet to part no more. In the mean

time, may the Lord give us a patient, thankful, and childlike resignation and acquiescence in his divine will, which is the highest attainment to which we can aspire in this life; preferable, in my judgment, to the power of speaking with the tongue of men and of angels, the working of miracles, or having understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge. This is the silent and secret way of peace, by which God leads those who are little in their own eyes to that sweet repose which many who are known and esteemed in the world are little acquainted with. * * * *

I am, dear Madam,

Your most affectionate and obliged friend and servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

REV. MR. HERVEY TO A FRIEND.

DEAR SIR,

I truly commiserate your variegated calamity; and heartily wish I could suggest any thing which might be the means of administering some ease to your afflicted mind, and of assisting you to reap ample benefit from your distressed situation.

You well know that all afflictions of what kind soever proceed from God: "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." Isa. xiv. 7. They spring not from the dust; are not the effects of a random chance, but the appointment of an all-wise, all-foreseeing God, who intends them all for the good of his creatures. This, I think, is the fundamental argument for resignation, and the grand source of comfort. This should be our first reflection, and our sovereign support: He that gave me my being, and gave his own Son for my redemption, he has assigned me this suffering. What he ordains, who is boundless love, must be good: what he ordains, who is unerring wisdom, must be proper.

This reconciled Eli to the severest doom that ever was denounced. "It is the Lord;" and though grievous to human nature, much more grievous to parental affection, yet it is unquestionably the best; therefore I humbly acquiesce, I kiss the awful decree, and say from my very soul, "Let him do what seemeth him good." 1 Sam. iii. 18.

This calmed the sorrows of Job under all his unparalleled distresses: the Lord gave my affluence and prosperity; the Lord has taken all away; rapacious hands and warring elements were only his instruments, therefore, I submit, I adore, I bless his holy name.

This consolation fortified the man Christ Jesus, at the approach of his inconceivably bitter agonies: "The cup which, not my implacable enemies, but my Father by their administration has given me, shall I not drink it?" It is your Father, dear sir, your heavenly Father, who loves you with an everlasting love, that has mingled some gall with your portion in life. Sensible of the beneficent hand from which the visitation comes, may you always bow your head in patient submission; and acknowledge with the excellent, but afflicted monarch Hezekiah, "Good is the word of the Lord concerning me." 2 Kings xx. 19.

All afflictions are designed for blessings. To do us good at the latter end, however they may cross our desires, or disquiet our minds at present. "Happy," says the Spirit of inspiration, and not wretched, "is the man whom God correcteth." Job v. 7. And for this reason, because his merciful chastenings though "not joyous but grievous, yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." Heb. xii. 11. God's ways are not as our ways. The children whom we love, we are apt to treat with all the soft blandishments and fond caresses of profuse indulgence; and too, too often humour them to their hurt, if not to their ruin. But the Father of spirits is wise in his love, and out of kindness severe. Therefore it is said, "Whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Heb. xii. 6. Would you

not, dear sir, be a child of that everlasting Father, whose favour is better than life? Affliction is one sign of your adoption to this inestimable relation. Would you not be an "heir of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?" Affliction is your path to this blissful patrimony. "Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven." Acts xiv. 22. Would you not be made like your ever blessed and amiable Redeemer? He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and every disciple must expect to be as his Master.

Perhaps you may think your affliction peculiarly calamitous; and that if it had been of some other kind, you could more cheerfully submit, more easily bear it; but you are in the hands of an all-wise Physician, who joins to the bowels of infinite love the discernment of infinite wisdom. He cannot mistake your case. He sees into the remotest events; and though he varies his remedies, always prescribes with exact propriety to every one's particular state. Assure yourself, therefore, the visitation which he appoints is the most proper recipe in the dispensatory of heaven: any other would have been less fit to convey saving health to your immortal part, and less subservient to your enjoyment of the temporal blessings which may, perhaps, be yet in store for you.

Should you inquire what benefits accrue from afflictions?—Many and precious. They tend to wean us from the world. When our paths are strewed with roses, when nothing but music and odours float around, how apt are we to be enamoured with our present condition, and forget the crown of glory, forget Jesus and everlasting ages? But affliction, with a faithful, though harsh voice, rouses us from the sweet delusion. Affliction warns our hearts to arise and depart from these inferior delights, because here is not our rest. True and lasting joys are not here to be found. The sweeping tempest and the beating surge teach the mariner to prize the haven, where undisturbed repose waits his arrival. In like manner, disappointments, vexations,

anxieties, crosses, teach us to long for those happy mansions, where all tears will be wiped away from the eyes, Rev. xxi. 4; all anguish banished from the mind; and nothing, nothing subsist but the fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

Afflictions tend to bring us to Christ. Christ has unspeakable and everlasting blessings to bestow—such as the world can neither give nor take away; such as are sufficient to pour that oil of gladness into our souls, which will swim above the waves of an earthly tribulation. But are we not, dear sir, are we not most unhappily indolent and inattentive to these blessings, in the gay hours of an uninterrupted prosperity? It is very observable, that scarce any made application to our divine Redeemer in the days of his abode with us but the children of affliction. The same spirit of supineness still possesses mankind. We undervalue, we disregard the Lord Jesus, and the unspeakable privileges of his gospel, while all proceeds smoothly, and nothing occurs to discompose the tenor of our tranquillity. But when misfortunes harass our circumstances, or sorrows oppress our minds, then we are willing, we are glad, we are earnest, to find rest in Christ.

In Christ Jesus there is pardon of sins. Sin is a burthen incomparably sorer than any other distress. Sin would sink us into the depths of eternal ruin, and transfix us with the agonies of endless despair. But Christ has, at the price of his very life, purchased pardon for all that fly to him. He has borne the guilt of their sins in his own body on the tree. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Have they deserved condemnation?—He has sustained it in their stead. Are they obnoxious to the wrath of God?—He has endured it, as their substitute; he has made satisfaction, complete satisfaction for all their iniquities, Rom. iii. 25, 26; so that justice itself, the most rigorous justice, can demand no more. Oh, that distresses may prompt us to prize this mercy! may incite us to desire ardently this blessedness! Then it will be good for us to have been afflicted, Ps. cxix. 71.

Christ has obtained for us the gift of the Holy Spirit, Gal. iii. 2, to sanctify our hearts and renew our natures. An unrenewed carnal mind is ten thousand times more to be lamented, more to be dreaded, than any external calamities. And nothing can cure us of this most deadly disease but the sanctification of the Spirit. This divine Spirit alone is able to put the fear of God in our souls, and awaken the love of God in our hearts. Jer. xxxii. 40. His influences suggest such awful and amiable thoughts to our minds as will be productive of these Christian graces. This sacred principle subdues our corruptions, and conforms us to our blessed Redeemer's image. How is this best gift of heaven disesteemed by the darlings of the world, who have nothing to vex them! But how precious is it, how desirable to the heirs of sorrow! They breathe after it, as the thirsty hart panteth for the water-brooks. They cannot be satisfied without its enlightening, purifying, cheering communications. This is all their request, and all their relief, that the spirit of Christ may dwell in their hearts, Rom. viii. 9; may enable them to possess their souls in patience, Luke xxi. 19; and derive never-ending good from momentary evils. Before I close these lines, permit me to recommend one expedient, which yet is not mine, but the advice of an inspired apostle, "If any be afflicted, let him pray." Dear sir, fly to God in all your adversity, pour out your complaints before him in humble supplication, and show him your trouble. Ps. cxlii. 2. When I am in heaviness, says a holy sufferer, I will think upon God, Ps. lxi. 2, his omnipotent power, his unbounded goodness, whose ear is ever, ever open to receive the cry of the afflicted. When the psalmist was distressed on every side, without were fightings, within were fears, the throne of grace was his place of refuge; "I give myself to prayer," Ps. cix. 3, was his declaration. This method we read Hannah took, and you cannot but remember the happy issue. 1 Sam. i. 10. Let me entreat you to imitate these excellent examples; frequently bend your knees, and more frequently lift up your heart

to the Father of mercies and God of all consolation; not doubting but that through the merits of his dear Son, through the intercession of your compassionate High-priest, he will hear your petitions, will comfort you under all your tribulations, and make them all work together for your infinite and eternal good.

In the mean time, I shall not cease to pray that the God of all power and grace may vouchsafe to bless these considerations, and render them as balm to your aching heart, and as food to the divine life in your mind.

I am, dear Sir,
With much esteem, compassion, and respect,
Your very sincere well-wisher, &c.

REV. H. DAVIDSON TO REV. T. DAVIDSON, ON THE DEATH OF REV. G. WILSON.

To the shame of our selfishness be it spoken, how loath are we to make an exchange of a friend on earth for one in heaven! A great man and a peer is fallen in our Israel. When we are mourning, we must not murmur. It becomes rather to adore God for making him so great, without which we should not have had the occasion to mourn; and that he continued him so long capable of performing so many acceptable and honourable services to the church of God.

As our world loses by the death of eminent saints, the other gains by it. They fall in our world, to rise more illustrious there. Could we trace them exulting before the throne of God and of the Lamb, triumphing in our blessed Redeemer, in immortal youth and vigour, freed from all disorder of body and mind for ever; could we discover how bright they shine, how ardently they love, how humbly they adore; and could we hear the melody of their songs;—it would soon make us weary of this sinning, vain world, and adopt these words in an

allowable sense, Let us also go, that we may die with them.

You may easily, dear sir, imagine how this loss affects me, and that in a very tender part. An able and judicious, an affectionate and constant friend for upwards of thirty-five years! My two dearest friends on earth, before me in every thing that was good and valuable, have likewise got to heaven before me, and left to poor me the sinning, sighing part, while they are joined to the spirits made perfect in knowledge, holiness, and joy. However well pleased our Lord and the saints are in one another upon the change that death makes, it is not easy to make us pleased too, and cordially wish them joy of their new dignity and elevation. Their sentiments are different. Their affections are raised and ennobled; and, as well as they loved us, they would not come back to us for a thousand worlds. Upon their entrance into heaven, we may reasonably suppose their first wish is, "O that I had been sooner here; and their next wish is for our being with them as soon as may be. The saints are Christ's friends as well as ours; and we must allow him his blessed will (John xvii. 24), to have his friends about him, as well as we have had them so long; and it may be, before Christ has had them so long with him as some of us have had them here below, we will be with them again, and Christ, and they, and we be all together. O, what a happy meeting! They and we freed of all natural and sinful infirmities! There the communion of saints is in perfection, and this blessed society shall never break up or separate. No parting salutation there. The word farewell is no part of the heavenly language.

Now, my dear friend, when our Lord takes away our gracious, eminently useful friends, and public blessings, we must learn to translate our affection and dependence from earth to heaven, from these short-lived and uncertain supports to the living God; and as our eye is directed to and fixed upon him, we shall be composed and comforted, even when Providence has set

us down among the tombs. We are called to mourn, but not as without hope, nor as if Christ's interest was to sink and die with them. No; its stability depends not on any mortal, but upon Him that said, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore." Christians die, and ministers die; but the word of the Lord dieth not, but liveth for ever. It is good news, that though the earthen vessel is broken, the heavenly treasure is not lost and buried in the grave. O, to be taught of God, to look up to him who has the seven spirits of God, to supply all our wants, to heal the wide breaches that are made from time to time! The weaker the poor instruments are that are left, the excellency of th power will be more of God.

REV. MR. MUIR TO A LADY, ON THE DEATH OF HER FATHER.

MADAM,

Your present trial arises from what is the true commencement of your father's triumph and perfection. Taking the dispensation in this form of light, to grieve and to sin would be the same: for, if we rejoice at the conversion of sinners, why be sorrowful at the glorification of saints?

Yet I am aware that your loss, abstractly considered, is a source of distress. It would be impiety to feel no sorrow; and an attempt to reason you out of it would be fruitless and foolish. Far from endeavouring this, I would rather mingle my tears with yours. However culpable the after-conduct of Job's friends, I have often admired the propriety of their first interview with him. Instead of beginning with arguments of a comforting nature, like men of tender feelings, and who wished to bear their friend's burden, they lifted up their voice and wept, and none spake a word to him, for they saw his

grief was very great. Grief hath a period wherein expressive silence is the truest sympathy.

Yet constitutional differences may render different applications needful for the same disease; and grounds of encouragement simply suggested may have some influence, even in such circumstances. Need I suggest as (where suitably improved) the infallible specific in all such cases, that "the Lord liveth?" Whatever comforts we enjoy, are they not all derived from and dispensed and continued by him? What though particular effects be removed? The glorious cause remains, and remains as willing to help, ready to uphold, and capable of administering to our needs as ever. It is the Lord who renders comforts comforting to us; and, if he makes the breasts of the creature in our view run dry, can he not open other sources, even of creature consolation? Yes, though he should open them in rocks, whence they may be least expected. Or can he not, by such dispensations, wean the soul from creatures, and make the whole desire terminate in himself, in whom is all we can need, all we can wish, all we can enjoy? Having him, we have all; without him the creation itself (the things in it we most esteem not excepted) would be a poor, a puny, a miserable all. Does he live? What then of the Christian's hope and comfort can die? What deduction can take place from their happiness and portion? Nay, madam, the very death of creature comforts is an evidence that the Lord liveth, and a consequence of it. As the tender-hearted parent of his ransomed family, he weighs all their pains and all their pleasures in an even balance, without permitting the one or the other to exceed the precise degrees which to infinite wisdom, sovereign goodness, everlasting love, seem best for each of them. In the execution of his fatherly plan, particular members of his family may feel present anxiety and tribulation: yet the consideration of his hand in it, and that he liveth, should have a sweetly silencing influence, making us, with reason, hold our peace, or (with Eli) say, "It is the Lord, let him do what he pleaseth." I am sensible

these things are sooner said than done: but the Lord liveth, the source of covenant grace, for directing and enabling to such exercise all the weary travellers of hope.

The crowning ingredient in this cup of Christian consolation is the blessed assurance, "and because I live, ye shall live also." So said our dear Immanuel; and as sure as he said it, he will perform unto all his servants that word of grace upon which he now causes them to hope. Many circumstances in the Christian's lot wear at present a deathlike aspect, and blessings come under such disguise that the love of a Father, the grace of a Saviour, and the accomplishment of the promise are not discovered in them. But because the Lord liveth, these very circumstances, deathlike as they are, shall contribute towards their spiritual life, and, to each of them singly, issue in life eternal. Then the former things will be done away, and the immediate visions of Jesus shall banish every feeling of pain from any remembrance of former sorrow. Then all the children of the kingdom shall meet, and shall live with their living Lord, no more to part from or to pain one another, to eternity. O life truly divine! how happy the people! how happy the person who is in such a case! how happy they whose God is the Lord! May your father's God be your God for ever and ever, and your guide even unto death.

FROM A GENTLEMAN TO A FRIEND ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

Yours, my dear friend, I received a few posts ago, which brought me again to the house of mourning. There I find it much better for me to be than in the house of mirth; and that, I am persuaded, is the most proper station for us all. It is now our time to be sorrowful, but our sorrow shall be turned into joy.

Nay, in the midst of our present griefs, we are not overwhelmed with sorrow. You also join the numerous cloud of witnesses, while you sorrow not as those who have no hope; while you follow your dead within the vail, whither the blessed forerunner has for us entered; while you look beyond your own remaining years or days to the celestial point that ends our mortal story, that begins our immortal, amid the thousands of thousands who hunger no more, neither thirst any: for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne doth lead them, and feed them by the living fountains of water, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes. O for the lively faith of these words! May He who gives liberality and upbraids not bestow it. He knows our weakness without it, and he knows our thorny way, that we must deny ourselves, must take up our cross and follow him. Who is sufficient for these things? Blessed be his name, our sufficiency is of God. His word, his faithful word, stands full on our side. Whatever discouragements from without, or from within, are against us, that word cannot fail. What then am I, who so often call it in question, and say, Doth his promise fail for evermore? hath he forgotten to be gracious? Indeed, when he is pleased in any measure to draw aside the vail, I can glory in my weakness, that his power may rest upon me. But when he hides his face I am troubled. In the day of adversity I expect support; but when I am disappointed, as I think, then my heart fails. Yet I sometimes say this is mine infirmity, there is a need-be of heaviness for a season, through manifold temptations: and I am ashamed of my complaints, when I think of the Captain of our salvation crying out, as in the 22d Psalm, "Who knows the source of these strong cries and tears, from what clouds and depth of hiding they proceeded?" Such grief he surely was acquainted with; and should any of his followers think it strange that they are led in the road of sorrow? Should they not rather think it strange, wondrous strange, that a perpetual or everlasting darkness does not cover them? What shall we say of him, what

shall we say to him who was oppressed for our sake in the days of his flesh, who took on him all the waves, all the billows of Almighty wrath, that we might be delivered from them, and who now shines for our everlasting light, our God, our glory.

Let us then look unto the Author and Finisher of our faith. Let us believe that his eye is on us, pondering all our paths, caring for us even to the numbering of the hairs of our head, and thinking towards us thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give us an expected end. All things are delivered unto him of the Father. Will he not acquiesce? Will we not say amen and amen? Yes, we will: through his grace, you will join with yours in all affection, &c.

A LETTER WRITTEN TO A LADY ON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND, BY THE REV. JOHN SUMMERFIELD, A.M.

My dear Mrs. W. must not suppose, that, because I have not broken silence until now, I had no sympathy with her under her late bereavement. Job's friends "sat by his side upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was great." But then surely there is a fit time when the minister of peace should break the seal of his commission, and fulfil its mandate, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." It would indeed be impertinent in any other than the Prince of life, who was about to give back to the disconsolate widow her greatest earthly treasure, to say "weep not;" oh no! it is permitted to us to weep, and even to sorrow many days; but then "let us not sorrow as do others; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also them that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him;" "he is not dead then, but sleepeth;" and Jesus will yet awake him out of sleep. He has long known

that his Redeemer liveth, and that in the latter day, he should stand again upon the earth, and see him eye to eye—him whom he loved, though he saw him not, and in whom he long rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Oh, how I should have desired to have been with him, when the shadows of time were flitting away, and the glories of eternity bursting upon his open vision! Oh, how I should have longed to have witnessed in him with what peace a Christian can die! I might have learned a lesson, which is now lost to me for ever. But you witnessed it; nay, you were the witness of life, which was a daily lesson; the last chapter of which might be summed up in one line, "I live; yet not I,—but Christ liveth in me." He felt that for him to live was Christ; but now he finds that to die is gain. Happy soul! thy days are ended. He will not return to us, but we shall go to him; he has gained the prize before us; but then, although we have it not as yet, "there is laid up for us a crown of righteousness, which the Lord will give at that day." And though we should long be kept out of the possession of it, rust will not corrupt it; it is a crown of glory that fadeth not away! Oh, that you and yours may gain the blissful shore as safely as he has done, without any shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience! and oh, my God! remember me! When your feelings will permit, I should be glad to hear some particulars of the last moments of my much beloved and never-to-be-forgotten friend. He was among the first of my friendships in New-York, both as to my early acquaintance with him, and the value I placed upon his disinterested kindness to me! I am bereaved indeed; one after another is summoned away, and I am left to hear tales of wo. It sounds like a knell unto myself, "be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." Farewell, my dear friend, and may he, who knows how to comfort them that are in trouble, pour in the oil and the wine into your broken, bleeding heart.

Yours in the Lord, J. SUMMERFIELD.

DR. LETTSOM'S LETTER TO LADY ANN ERSKINE, ON THE DEATH OF THE RT. HON. SELINA, COUNTESS OF HUNTINGTON.

DEAR LADY ANN ERSKINE,

I deeply sympathize with thee and all the family in Christ, in the removal of that evangelical woman, so lately among us, the Countess of Huntington. Your souls were so united, and your affections so endeared together, that I cannot but feel in a particular manner on thy account; lest the mournful state of thy mind may undermine thy constitution, and endanger a life spent in mitigating the painful sufferings of the body of our deceased friend while living. Her advanced age and debilitated frame had long prepared my mind for an event, which has at length deprived the world of its brightest ornament. How often have we, when sitting by her sick-bed, witnessed the faithful composure with which she has viewed this awful change! Not with the fearful prospect of doubt—not with the dreadful apprehension of the judgment of an offended Creator: hers was all peace within; a tranquillity and cheerfulness, which conscious acceptance alone could convey. How often have we seen her, elevated above the earth and earthly things, uttering this language—"My work is done; I have nothing to do but to go to my heavenly Father!" Let us, therefore, under a firm conviction of her felicity, endeavour to follow her as she followed the Redeemer. Let us be thankful that she was preserved to advanced age, with the perfect exercise of her mental faculties; and that, under long and painful days and nights of sickness, she never repined; but appeared constantly animated in prayer and thankfulness for unutterable mercies she experienced. When I look back upon the past years of my attendance, and con-

nect with it the multitudes of others whom my profession has introduced me to, I feel consolation in acknowledging, that of all the daughters of affliction, she exhibited the greatest degree of Christian composure that ever I witnessed; and that submission to divine allotment, however severe and painful, which nothing but divine aid could inspire.

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In her last illness, I never heard her utter a desire to remain longer on earth. A little before she died, she repeatedly said in a feeble voice, just to be heard, "I shall go to my Father this night!" adding, "Has God forgot to be gracious? or is there any end of his loving-kindness?" On this day she conversed a little on the subject of sending missionaries to Otaheite, in the South Seas, in the pious hope of introducing Christianity among that mild but uninformed race of people; indeed, her whole life seemed devoted to one great object—the glory of God and the salvation of his creatures.

J. C. Lettsom.

REV. DR. DODDRIDGE'S LETTER TO A LADY, ON THE DEATH OF HER BROTHER.

My heart is so full of the thought of your dear brother's death, that I know not how to command my pen to any other subject. Believe me, madam, I see that heavy affliction in many of its most aggravated circumstances. But need I mention them to you, who have, no doubt, a much tenderer sense of them? Or need I mention those common consolations which Christianity affords us under all our calamities, or those which the circumstances of the case before us do most peculiarly admit? I know you have already given them their weight, and are well furnished with consolations on this head; having been obliged, by such afflictions, frequently to have

recourse to them. No doubt, you have often been thinking, that, as we are Christians, we are not to be so much concerned about the different kinds of providential dispensations which we are now exercised with, whether of a prosperous or a calamitous nature, as about the correspondency of our behaviour to them. The law of Christianity, not to say of nature itself, requires that we should not only be silent and composed, but cheerful and thankful under our afflictions. This, indeed, is what the generality of Christians are wanting in; but that is no proof that it is an irrational or impossible demand, but rather a sublime attainment in religion. It is evident that nothing can be more grateful to God, and edifying to the world than to see that a Christian, under the heavy pressure of calamity, can not only restrain the excess of sorrow, and suppress those indecent complaints which the corruption of nature would be too ready to suggest, but can mingle praises with his tears, and love and rejoice in his heavenly Father, even when he feels the smart of his correcting rod. Let me suggest a few hints upon this head, which you will easily enlarge upon in your own thoughts to greater advantage. God hath seen fit to take away your brother; and is not this a proper season to be thankful that you so long enjoyed him? No doubt, you have been thinking of his character in the most advantageous particulars of it; and perhaps have considered it as a great aggravation of your affliction, that you have lost so excellent a brother. But may you not now press in each of these afflicting thoughts to subserve the purposes of thankfulness and joy? Do not you reflect, that the more excellent he was, the more surprising was the goodness of God in bestowing him upon you, and continuing him so long to you? When you say, it may be with tears in your eyes, "How few are there in the world that could have sustained such a loss!" what is it but to say in other words, how few are there in the world, on whom God ever bestowed so valuable a friend as he gave to me? Let common sense judge, whether that be matter of

complaint or praise. You should be thankful to God, that for so many years you had a constant share in his prayers. The more religious he was, the more frequently and earnestly he prayed, and the more favourably did God regard him. No doubt but his prayers are still in remembrance before God; and as he most frequently asked those blessings for you, which are of the most excellent and permanent nature, much of the good effect of these addresses may be still behind. You know not how many refreshing visits of his grace, how many favourable interpositions of his providence, how high a degree of holiness in this world, and of usefulness in the next, God may now be prepared to bestow upon you, in answer to the prayers of this excellent man. Once more, let the providence of God in removing your brother be improved to a more thankful sense of his goodness in continuing your surviving brother, whose lot is cast so much nearer to you. If you take the matter in this view, it brings your passions to a balance; for you can never imagine, that we are to lament any degree of affliction in a greater proportion than we rejoice in an equal degree of comfort. You see, madam, you have cause of thankfulness, though your brother be dead; and that many of the considerations with which you feed your sorrows are capable of being made subservient to the nobler exercises of gratitude and love. But what if I should advance still further, and say that the death of your brother should not only allow you to be thankful for your other mercies, but itself should be made the matter of praise? I think I should say no more than the apostle hath said, when he exhorts us "in every thing to give thanks." Nay, I should say no more than I am confident your deliberate reason must subscribe to. Are you not the servant of God, and have you not yielded yourself to him? Was it not the business of the last sacrament day? And are you not renewing the dedication every day of your life? When you consecrate yourself to God, you give up every separate interest of your own; and resolve all into this one great

petition, that "his name may be glorified," particularly in all you are, and all you have. Now do you imagine that God would have removed so eminent a saint, so useful a minister, and afflicted a numerous and religious family, as well as a multitude of sympathizing friends, if he had not known that it was for his glory? When you have been saying, as you have daily said, "Father, thy will be done;" were you not then praying for the loss of your dearest comforts, even for the death of your brother, and of every other friend you have, upon supposition that it were the will of God? You certainly were; unless you meant to say, Let thy will be done, so far as it is agreeable to my own. Now, I leave you to judge, whether the answer of prayer be the matter of complaint or praise. I know it is very difficult to apprehend how such a dispensation as this should be for "the glory of God." But have we known so little of the nature of the great God, as to question the wisdom of his providential dispensations, merely because they appear unaccountable to us? We use ourselves to a contracted way of thinking and reasoning upon this head; much like a small congregation in the country, that fancy the interest of religion is very much damaged by the removal of a useful minister from them, though it be to a sphere of much more extensive service. Because this earth is our habitation, we fondly imagine it to be a place of very great importance; whereas if we consider the number and excellence of the inhabitants of heaven, we must be forced to confess, that it is very probable those revolutions may be very serviceable to the whole creation, which are detrimental to some particular part, in its highest and most important interest. And of this nature I take the removal of excellent ministers to be, especially in the prime of their strength and usefulness. I may add, that there are certain views, both with relation to him and yourself, which will farther evince your obligations to thankfulness. With regard to your brother, you easily apprehend a foundation for thankfulness, though perhaps you have not considered his present happiness

in that particular view. You believe, with the greatest reason, that death was inconceivably advantageous to him, and that now he is "absent from the body, he is present with the Lord." Now, with all your tender friendship, can you question whether it be your part to rejoice with him in that glory and felicity which he now enjoys? Or can you imagine that you are to be so much concerned that he is not with you as to forget to rejoice that he is with God? Was it more for you to lose a brother than for the apostles to part with Christ himself? And yet he says the very same thing which shocked you so much a few lines above; "if ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I go to the Father." When your brother was alive, you did not only take pleasure in him when he was in the same house and room with yourself, but at the distance of above a hundred miles. You rejoiced to think that he was well; that he was surrounded with agreeable friends, furnished with plentiful accommodations; and, above all, laying himself out with vigour and success in the service of our great common Master. And will you entertain so mean an idea of the preparation which the God of heaven and earth has made for the supreme happiness of his beloved children, as to question whether he be now raised to more valuable friends, more delightful entertainment, and a sphere of more extensive service? I am confident, madam, you would have been thankful from your heart for your brother's recovery; and would it have been a greater mercy to him to have been raised from a languishing illness to a state of confirmed health, amid the vanity and misery of this state of mortality, than to be exalted to immortal health and vigour, amid the entertainment of angels, and the enjoyment of God? Or has so generous-spirited a person as yourself begun now to imagine, that you are to be thankful on the account of none but yourself? So far from that, you think it a great matter of thankfulness, and no doubt you are frequently praising God for it, that you have an excellent brother left, so agreeably settled, so universally respected, and so

zealously and successfully engaged in the most honourable service. But is it not more, that you have another brother among the blessed angels in heaven? How different are the services, which the one is paying to the throne of grace, and the other to the throne of glory! When they are both engaged, it may be at the very same moment, in the contemplation of God and Divine things, how vastly do you think the younger brother has now the advantage of the elder? May there not be the same difference in accuracy, solidity, and manly pleasure, between the thoughts of the blessed saint in heaven and the philosopher, and the roving imagination of a little infant, in which reason is just beginning to dawn. Certainly, it should be a constant source of delight to us, amid all the disturbances and calamities of life, that we may have so many friends in heaven, whose joy and glory should be to us as our own. You must now give me leave to add, that you have reason to be thankful for this dispensation of providence, not only from a principle of zeal for God and friendship to your brother, but from a regard to your own personal interest. The gospel teacheth its sincere professors to regard every providence as a mercy, when it tells them that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God;" and therefore, though you could not see mercy in this particular stroke, religion would nevertheless require you to believe and acknowledge it. But cannot you yourself perceive some mercy in it? Has it not, as you are pleased to intimate in your letter, an apparent tendency to wean your affections from this world, and to raise them to the heavenly felicity? Do you not find the thoughts of death more tolerable, more delightful to you, since God has removed so powerful an attractive from earth, and translated it to heaven? Nay, do you not find it a considerable exercise of patience to be absent, it may be for several years, from this dear, happy brother, whose image continually presents itself to your mind in so much the more charming a light, as your heart is melted with grief for his death? Now, if an indifference to this

world and a most affectionate desire of a happy immortality be an important branch of the Christian temper; if the Scriptures are so frequently inculcating it upon us, and we so continually praying for the increase and lamenting the deficiency of it, that we should be thankful for those providences which, of all others, have the greatest tendency to promote it? I write these things, madam, not with the coldness of a stranger, but with the tender sympathy of a friend; and with so much the greater sympathy, as since I began this letter, I have lost a very agreeable and valuable person out of my congregation, with some circumstances which render the stroke peculiarly surprising and afflicting. May God teach us so to bear and improve all our afflictions, both in ourselves and our friends, that we may have reason to reflect upon them as the most valuable mercies of our lives; and that they may fit us for that happy world, where we shall be above the need, and then undoubtedly above the reach of them!

REV. MR. WHITFIELD TO A FRIEND, ON THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER.

Dear Sir,

Having heard the melancholy news of your brother's death, I could not help sending you a line, to let you know how much I am concerned. Indeed, I cannot say I am so much grieved on his account, as for that sorrow which the loss of so valuable a youth must necessarily occasion to all his relations. No! I rather envy him in his blessed condition. He, unquestionably, is divinely blessed, while we are still left behind to wrestle with unruly passions, and by a continued looking unto Jesus, and running in our Christian race, to press forward to that high prize, of which he, dear youth, is now in full fruition. These are my true sen-

timents about his death; I leave you to judge, then, whether I had need be concerned on his account; and surely was it to be put to your choice, whether so religious a young man should live or die, no one could be so cruel as to wish to detain him from his wished-for glory. Be not then too much concerned at his death, but let us rather learn that important lesson which his whole life taught us, "that there is nothing comparable to an early piety." I thought to have spent many agreeable hours with him in Christian and edifying conversation, when I came to Gloucester; but he is gone to more agreeable company, and long before now has joined the heavenly choir.

I shall only add, that as your brother imitated our blessed Saviour in his life, so I pray God he may resemble him in his death, and be a means, like his beloved Redeemer, of reconciling all former animosities, which is the hearty wish of,

Dear Sir,

Your sincere friend and humble servant,

G. W.

REV. DR. WATTS TO MADAM SEWALL, UPON THE DEATH OF HER CHILDREN.

MADAM,

Yesterday, from Mr. Sewall's hand, I received the favour of several letters from my friends in New England, and a particular account of that sharp and surprising stroke of providence, that has made a painful and lasting wound in your soul. He desired a letter from my hand, directed to you, which might carry in it some balm for an afflicted spirit. * * * *

But the loss you have sustained is of a tenderer and more distressing kind. Yet let us see whether there are not sufficient springs of consolation, flowing all around you, to allay the smart of so sharp a sorrow,

And may the Lord open our eyes, as he did the eyes of Hagar in the wilderness, to espy the spring of water when she was dying with thirst, and her child over-against her, ready to expire. Gen. xxi. 19.

Have you lost two lovely children? Did you make them your idols? If you did, God has saved you from idolatry. If you did not, you have your God still, and a creature cannot be miserable who has a God. The little words, "my God," have infinitely more sweetness than "my sons" or "my daughters." Were they very desirable blessings? Your God calls you to the nobler sacrifice. Can you give up these to him at his call? So was Isaac, when Abraham was required to part with him at God's altar. Are you not a daughter of Abraham? Then imitate his faith, his self-denial, his obedience, and make your evidences of such a spiritual relation to him shine brighter on this solemn occasion. Has God taken them from our arms? And had you not given them to God before? Had you not devoted them to him in baptism? Are you displeased that God calls for his own? Was not your heart sincere in the resignation of them to him? Show then, madam, the sincerity of your heart in leaving them in the hand of God. Do you say they are lost? Not out of God's sight and God's world, though they are gone out of our sight and our world. "All live to God." You may hope the covenant of grace has sheltered them from the second death. They live, though not with you.

Are you ready to complain you have brought forth for the grave? It may be so, but not in vain. Is. lxv. 25. "They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble (i. e. for sorrow without hope); for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." This has been a sweet text to many mothers, when their children are called away betimes. And the prophet Jeremy, ch. xxxi. 15, 17, has very comfortable words to allay the same sorrows. Did you please yourself in what comforts you might have derived from them in maturer years? But, madam, do you consider sufficiently, that God has taken them away

from the evil to come, and hid them in the grave from the prevailing and mischievous temptations of a degenerate age? My brother's wife in London has buried seven or eight children, and among them all her sons. This thought has reconciled her to the providence of God, that the temptations of young men in this age are so exceedingly great, and she has seen so many of the young gentlemen of her acquaintance so shamefully degenerate, that she wipes her tears for the sons she has buried, and composes her soul to patience and thankfulness, with one only daughter remaining. Perhaps God has by this stroke prevented a thousand unknown sorrows. Are your sons dead? But are all your mercies dead too? A worthy husband is a living comfort; and may God preserve and restore him to you with joy! Food, raiment, safety, peace, liberty of religion, access to the mercy-seat, hope of heaven; all these are daily matters of thankfulness. Good madam, let not one sorrow bury them all. Show that you are a Christian by making it appear that religion has supports in it which the world doth not know. What can a poor worldling do, but mourn over earthly blessings departed, and gone down with them comfortless to the grave? But methinks a Christian should lift up his head, as partaking of brighter hopes. May the blessed Spirit be your comforter, madam. Endeavour to employ yourself in some business or amusement of life continually, lest a solitary and inactive frame of mind tempt you to sit brooding over your sorrows, and nurse them to a dangerous size. Turn your thoughts often to the brighter scenes of heaven and the resurrection.

Forgive the freedom of a stranger, madam, who desires to be the humble and faithful servant of Christ and souls. ISAAC WATTS.

P.S.—Madam, you have so many excellent comforters around you, that I even blush to send you what I have written; yet since the narrowness of my paper has excluded two or three thoughts which may not be impertinent or useless on this mournful occasion, I will

insert them here. You know, madam, the great and blessed God had but one son, and he gave him up a sacrifice and devoted him to a bloody death out of love to such sinners as you and I. Can you show your gratitude to God in a more evident and acceptable manner than by willingly resigning your sons to him at the call of his providence? This act of willing resignation turns a painful affliction into a holy sacrifice. Are the two dearest things taken from the heart of a mother? Then may you ever set so much the loser to this world, and you have the fewer dangerous attachments to this life. It is a happiness for a Christian not to have the heart-strings tied too fast to any thing beneath God and heaven. Happy is the soul who is ready to remove at the Divine summons. The fewer engagements we have on earth, the more we may live above, and have our thoughts more fixed on things divine and heavenly. May this painful stroke be thus sanctified, and lead you nearer to God. I. W.

PATHETIC LETTER ON THE DEATH OF AN ONLY CHILD.

There is a nestling worm in every flower along the path of life; and, while we admire the spreading leaves and unfolding blossoms, the traitor often consumes the root, and all the beauty falls. You are not surprised that my letter opens with a serious reflection on the fleeting state of earthly pleasures. This my frequent theme will continue, I believe, till my eyes are shut upon this world, and I repose upon a bed of dust. The son of sorrow can teach you to tremble over every blessing you enjoy. Pay *now* to thy living friend the tear which was reserved for his grave. I have undergone one of the severest trials human nature can experience. I have seen a dear and only child, the little companion of all my hours of leisure, the delight of my

eyes, the pride of my heart, struggling in agonies of pain, while I poured over him my tears and prayers to heaven in vain. I have seen him dying—dead—coffined. I have kissed him in his shroud—I have taken the last farewell—I have heard the bell call him to the silent vault, and am now no more a father! I am stabbed to the heart, cut to the brain.

—— Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.—VIRGIL.

With what tender care was the boy nursed. How often has he been the pleasing burden of my arms. What hours of anxiety for his welfare have I felt. What endearing amusements for him invented. Amiable was his person, sensible his mind. All who saw, loved him—all who knew him admired a genius which outran his years. The sun no sooner rose than it was eclipsed. No sooner was the flower opened than it was cut down. My mind eagerly revolves every moment of past joy. All the parental affections rush like a torrent and overwhelm me. Wherever I go, I seem to see and hear him; turn round, and lose him.

What does this world present but a long walk of misery and desolation? In tears man is born—in agonies he dies. What fills up the interval? Momentary joys and lasting pains. Within, a war of passions; without, tumult and disorder reign. Fraud, oppression, riot, rapine, bloodshed, murder, fill up the tragic tale of every day; so that a wise man must often wish to have his curtain dropped, and the scene of vanity and vexation closed. To me, a churchyard is a pleasing walk. My feet often draw towards the graves, and my eyes turn towards the vault, where all the contentions of this world cease, and where the weary are at rest. "I praise," with Solomon, "the dead who are already dead, more than the living who are yet alive."

I will call reason and religion to my aid. Prayers and tears cannot restore my child, and to God who made us we must submit. Perhaps he was snatched in mercy from some impending wo. In life he might

have been miserable, in death he must be happy. I will not think him dead; I will not consider him confined in the vault, or mouldering in the dust—but risen; clad with true glory and immortality; gone to the regions of eternal day, where he will never know the loss of parents, or of a child; gone above the reach of sorrow, vice, or pain. That little hand, which was so busy to please here, now holds a cherub's harp. That voice, which was music to my ears, warbles sweet symphonies to our universal Father, Lord, and King. Those feet, which ran to welcome me from toil, and my arms received, while I held him up, and for the blessing used to thank my God, now traverse the starry pavement of the heavens. The society of weak, impure, unhappy mortals is exchanged for that of powerful, pure, blessed spirits; and his fair brow is encircled with a never-fading crown.

Shall I then grieve that he, who is become an angel, grew not to be a man? Shall I drag him from the skies? Wish him in the vale of sorrow? I would not, my dear boy, interrupt thy bliss. It is not for thee, but for myself I weep. I speak as if he was present. And who can tell but that he sees and hears me? "Are there not ministering spirits?" And our great Milton says,

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
> Unseen, both when we sleep and when we wake."

Perhaps, even now, he hovers over me with rosy wings; dictates to my heart, and guides the hand that writes.

The consideration of the sorrows of this life, and the glories of the next, is our best support. Dark are the ways of providence while we are wrapped up in mortality; but, convinced there is a God, we must hope and believe that all is right.

May the remainder of my days be spent in a faithful discharge of the duty I owe to the supreme Disposer of all events! I am but as a pilgrim here, have trod many

rough paths, and drank many bitter cups. As my days shorten, may the Sun of righteousness brighten over me, till I arrive at the new Jerusalem, where tears are wiped away from every eye, and sorrow is no more! May I descend into the grave, from which I have lately had so many "hair-breadth 'scapes," in peace! May I meet my angel boy at the gate of death; and may his hand conduct me to the palace of eternity! These are the fervent prayers of

Your afflicted friend, T. J.

A LETTER OF REV. DR. PAYSON, WRITTEN TO HIS SISTER A SHORT TIME BEFORE HIS TRIUMPHANT DEATH.

Dear Sister,

Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odours are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approaches, and now he fills the whole hemisphere; pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun; exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering with unutterable wonder why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants; I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion.

But why do I speak thus of myself and my feelings; why not speak only of our God and Redeemer? It is because I know not what to say. When I would speak of them my words are all swallowed up. I can only tell you what effects their presence produces, and even of these I can tell you but very little. O my sister, my sister! could you but know what awaits the Christian; could you know only so much as I know, you could not refrain from rejoicing, and even leaping for joy. Labours, trials, troubles, would be nothing; you would rejoice in afflictions and glory in tribulations; and, like Paul and Silas, sing God's praises in the darkest night and in the deepest dungeon. You have known a little of my trials and conflicts, and know that they have been neither few nor small; and I hope this glorious termination of them will serve to strengthen your faith, and elevate your hope.

And now, my dear, dear sister, farewell. Hold on your Christian course but a few days longer, and you will meet in heaven,

Your happy and affectionate brother,

EDWARD PAYSON.

HAPPY DEATHS.

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven."
YOUNG.

"As the rivers roll the smoothest the nearer they approach the ocean, as the sun appears most glorious when setting, so it is with the Christian."—Hear his expiring language! Farewell, all terrestrial scenes! I know that my Redeemer liveth. What a happy change! Earth for heaven, time for eternity, conflict for victory, sorrow for uninterrupted joy! Into thy hands, O immortal Saviour, I commit my spirit. Thine it is to conduct me through the valley, thine to raise to glory, and thine to crown me with eternal joy.

Mr. Haliburton, when dying, thus addressed those around him:—"Here is a demonstration of the reality and power of faith and godliness. I, a poor, weak, and timorous man, once as much afraid of death as any one; I, who was many years under the terrors of death, came, in the mercy of God, and by the power of his grace, composedly and with joy to look death in the face. I have seen it in its paleness, and all the circumstances of horror that attend it. I dare look it in the face in its most ghastly shape, and hope to have, in a little time, the victory over it. Glory, glory to him!—O what of God do I see! I have never seen any thing like it. The beginning and end of religion are wonderfully sweet! I long for his salvation,—I bless his name! I have found him! I am taken up in blessing him! I am dying, rejoicing in the Lord! O, I could not have believed that I should bear, and bear cheerfully as I have done, this rod which hath lain on me so long. This is a miracle. Pain without pain!

You see man dying, a monument of the glorious power of astonishing grace!"—Some time after, he said,—"When I shall be so weakened as not to be able to speak, I will give you, if I can, a sign of triumph when I am near to glory."—This he did: for when one said, "I hope you are encouraging yourself in the Lord," not being able to speak, he lifted up his hands, clapped them, and quickly after expired.

Mrs. Frederica Hayne in her illness, gave certain evidence of her unshaken faith in Christ, her assurance of an interest in the Redeemer, and her firm hope of eternal life. She told her physician, "it was for her children's sake she consulted; for her own part, she was quite ready to depart: death to her was nothing more than a transition from one apartment to another." A short period before her triumphant departure, she repeated, with a peculiar emphasis, the beautiful explanation of the second of faith by Luther, and with these words her happy spirit departed to another world, there to see His face "of whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named."

Jeremiah Evarts in the near prospect of death showed a most happy tranquillity. He had that peace of God which passeth all understanding. Who would not think himself rewarded for the toils and sufferings of a whole life, yea, of a thousand years, by what this faithful servant of God was permitted to enjoy just before his decease, when God caused so wonderful a light to shine upon his soul. Seeming to be nearly exhausted, he very tenderly expressed his affection for his Saviour. Soon after, he burst forth with expressions of rapture which cannot be described. "Praise him, praise him, praise him in a way which you know not of." And when it was said, "You will soon see Jesus as he is, and will then know how to praise him," he exclaimed, "Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful glory! We cannot comprehend! Wonderful glory! I will

praise him, I will praise him! Wonderful—glory—Jesus reigns."

EARLY PIETY EXEMPLIFIED IN THE HAPPY DEATH OF FRANCES ANN MYERS.

On the 26th day of December, 1827, Frances Ann Myers, the only child of our brother and sister, George R. and Lucy Ann Myers, of Richmond, Va., took her joyful passage from this world of sin and sorrow to the bosom of her Father and her God. For some hours previous to her death she had been silent and composed. Her father discovering that she became a little restless asked the cause. She replied, "I wish that man to leave the room," alluding to a gentleman who had called to see her; who, upon discovering that she was not willing to unbosom herself in his presence, shook hands with her and retired. She turned to her afflicted mother, who sat upon the bed near her, and said, "Mother, I want to bid you good-by." Her mother, with a heart overwhelmed with grief, and eyes streaming with tears said, "Where are you going, my dear child?" She, with a countenance serene and sweet, said, "To heaven."—"Do you want to go to heaven?" said her mother. She replied, "Yes, I am going to see Jesus." She then turned to the other side of the bed, where her aunt Hopkins stood, and said, "Good-by, Aunt Clary."—Her aunt said, "Where are you going, my dear?"—She replied, "To heaven, to see my little cousins," alluding to two of Major Hyde's little children, who had died a few days before. She then called her father, and taking him by the hand said, "Farewell."—He kissed her, and asked if she felt any pain. She said, "None;" then calling her grandfather, she bid him farewell, and said, "Are you coming to heaven?" After this she called separately upon all who were in the room, not forgetting three little coloured children, and took a final and affectionate leave of them.

Her uncle Hopkins, who stood at the foot of the bed, looking on with mingled emotions of astonishment,

grief, and joy, approached her, and said, "Do you know me?" She said, "Yes."—"Where are you going, my Frances?"—She replied, "To heaven." "I will try to come after you," said her uncle. She looked at him and said, "Are you not happy?" He replied, "Are you happy, my dear?" She, with a countenance strongly indicating the feelings of her heart, said, "Yes." She then sent for her three little cousins, near her own size, who she supposed were gone to the house of worship; and when they came, she kissed them and bid "good-by." After having made these solemn arrangements, with a countenance unspeakably sweet and composed, and a soul filled with peace and joy, she fell asleep in Jesus, aged 8 years, 7 months, and 20 days.

JOHN KERR.

POEMS.

FRIENDS SEPARATED BY DEATH.

Friend after friend departs;
  Who hath not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts
  That finds not here an end!
Were this frail world our final rest,
Living or dying none were blest.

Beyond the flight of time,—
  Beyond the reign of death,—
There surely is some blessed clime
  Where life is not a breath;
Nor life's affections transient fire,
Whose sparks fly upwards and expire.

There is a world above,
  Where parting is unknown;
A long eternity of love,
  Form'd for the good alone:
And faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that glorious sphere!

Thus star by star declines,
  Till all are past away;
As morning high and higher shines
  To pure and perfect day:
Nor sink those stars in empty night,
But hide themselves in heav'ns own light.

MONTGOMERY.

DEATH OF A CHRISTIAN.

How sweetly parts the Christian sun,
Just like the summer monarch set,
'Mid cloudless skies his journey done,
To rise in brighter regions yet.

Oh, where the Christian ends his days,
Lingers a lovely line of rays,
That speaks his calm departure blest,
And promises to those who gaze,
The same beatitude of rest.

EDMESTON.

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND.

Thou art gone to the grave! but we will not deplore thee,
Though sorrows and darkness encompass the tomb:
Thy Saviour has pass'd through its portals before thee,
And the lamp of his love is thy guide thro' the gloom!

Thou art gone to the grave! we no longer behold thee,
Nor tread the rough paths of the world by thy side;
But the wide arms of mercy are spread to enfold thee,
And sinners may die, for the sinless has died!

Thou art gone to the grave! and, its mansion forsaking
Perchance thy weak spirit in fear lingered long;
But the mild rays of paradise beam'd on thy waking,
And the sound which thou heardst was the seraphim's song!

Thou art gone to the grave! but we will not deplore thee,
Whose God was thy ransom, thy guardian, and guide;
He gave thee, he took thee, and he will restore thee,
And death has no sting, for the Saviour has died!

BISHOP HEBER.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. NEWTON.

SHE dropp'd a tear, and grasp'd my hand,
And fain she would have spoke;
But well my heart could understand
The language of her look.

Farewell! it meant; a last adieu!
I soon shall cease from pain;
This silent tear I drop for you!
We part—to meet again.

I said, "If, leaving all below,
You now have peace divine,
And would, but cannot, tell me so,
Give me at least a sign."

She rais'd and gently wav'd her hand,
And fill'd me with a joy,
To which the wealth of sea and land,
Compar'd, were but a toy.

* * * * * *

Fainter her breath, and fainter grew,
Until she breath'd her last:
The soul was gone before we knew
The stroke of death was past.

Soft was the moment, and serene,
That all her sufferings clos'd;
No agony or struggle seen,
No feature discompos'd.

The parting struggle all was mine,
"'Tis the survivor dies:"
For she was freed, and gone to join
The triumph of the skies.

JOHN NEWTON.

ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT DAUGHTER.

SWEET babe, she glanc'd into our world to see
A sample of our misery,
Then turned away her languid eye
To drop a tear or two, and die.
Sweet babe, she tasted of life's bitter cup,
Refused to drink the potion up!
But turn'd her little head aside,
Disgusted with the taste, and died.
Sweet babe, she listen'd for a while to hear
Our mortal griefs, then turn'd her ear
To angels' harps and songs, and cried,
To join their notes celestial, sighed, and died.

Sweet babe no more, but seraph now,
Before the throne behold her bow;
To heavenly joys her spirit flies,
Blest in the triumph of the skies;
Adores the grace that brought her there
Without a wish—without a care,
That wash'd her soul in Calv'ry's stream,
That shorten'd life's distressing dream.
Short pain—short grief—dear babe, was thine,
Now joys eternal and divine.

Yes, thou art fled, and saints a welcome sing,
Thine infant spirit soars on angel's wing.
Our dark affection might have hoped thy stay;
The voice of God has called his child away.

Like Samuel, early in the temple found,
Sweet Rose of Sharon, plant of holy ground;
Oh! more than Samuel blest, to thee 'tis given,
The God he serv'd on earth, to serve in heaven.

CUNNINGHAM.

ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD AT DAYBREAK.

BY THE LATE REV. R. CECIL

"Let me go, for the day breaketh."

CEASE here longer to detain me,
Fondest mother! drowned in wo;
Now thy kind caresses pain me;
Morn advances—let me go.

See yon orient streak appearing,
Harbinger of endless day;
Hark! a voice the darkness cheering,
Calls my new-born soul away.

Lately launched, a trembling stranger,
On this world's wild boisterous flood;
Pierced with sorrows, tossed with danger,
Gladly I return to God!

Now my cries shall cease to grieve thee,
Now my trembling heart find rest;
Kinder arms than thine receive me,
Softer pillow than thy breast.

Weep not o'er these eyes that languish,
Upward turn'd towards their home;
Raptur'd, they'll forget all anguish,
While they wait to see thee come.

There, my mother! pleasures centre—
Weeping, parting, care, or wo,
Ne'er our Father's house shall enter—
Morn advances—let me go.

As through this calm, this holy dawning
Silent glides my parting breath,
To an everlasting morning—
Gently close my eyes in death.

Blessings endless, richest blessings,
Pour their streams upon thy heart!
(Though no language yet possessing,)
Breathes my spirit ere we part.

Yet to leave thee sorrowing rends me,
Though again his voice I hear;
Rise! May every grace attend thee,
Rise! and seek to meet me there!

A MOTHER'S GRIEF.

To mark the sufferings of the babe,
That cannot speak its wo;
To see the infant's tears gush forth,
Yet know not why they flow;
To meet the meek uplifted eye,
That fain would ask relief,
Yet can but tell of agony,—
This is a mother's grief.

Through dreary days and darker nights
To trace the march of death
To hear the faint and frequent sigh,
The quick and shortened breath;
To watch the dread last strife draw near,
And pray that struggle brief,
Though all is ended with its close,—
This is a mother's grief.

To see in one short hour decayed
The hope of future years;
To feel how vain a father's prayers,
How vain a mother's tears;
To think the cold grave now must close
O'er what was once the chief
Of all the treasured joys of earth,—
This is a mother's grief.

Yet when the first wild throb is past
Of anguish and despair,
To lift the eye of faith to heaven,
And think my child is there,—
This best can dry the gushing tear,
This yields the heart relief,
Until the Christian's pious hope
O'ercomes a mother's grief.

DALE.

THE ORPHAN.

UPON my father's new-clos'd grave
Deep lay the winter's snow;
Green, now, the grass waves o'er his head,
And tall the tomb-weeds grow.

Along life's road no parent's hand
My homeless footsteps led;
No mother's arm in sickness sooth'd
And rais'd my throbbing head.

But other hearts, Lord, thou hast warm'd
With tenderness benign;
And in the stranger's eye I mark
The tear of pity shine.

The stranger's hand by thee is mov'd
To be the orphan's stay;
And, better far, the stranger's voice
Hath taught us how to pray.

Thou putt'st a new song in our mouth,
A song of praise and joy:
O may we not our lips alone,
But hearts, in praise employ!

To Him who little children took,
And in his bosom held,
And, blessing them with looks of love
Their rising fears dispell'd;

To him, while flow'rs bloom on the bank
Or lambs sport on the lea;
While larks with morning hymns ascend
Or birds chant on the tree;

To him let ev'ry creature join
In prayer, and thanks, and praise:
Infants their little anthems lisp,
Age, hallelujahs raise!

GRAHAME.

RESIGNATION.

WHEN musing sorrow weeps the past,
And mourns the present pain;
How sweet to think of peace at last,
And feel that death is gain!

'Tis not that murm'ring thoughts arise,
And dread a Father's will;
'Tis not that meek submission flies,
And would not suffer still.

It is that heaven-taught faith surveys
The path to realms of light;
And longs her eagle plumes to raise,
And lose herself in sight.

It is that hope with ardour glows
To see Him face to face,
Whose dying love no language knows
Sufficient art to trace.

It is that harass'd conscience feels
The pangs of struggling sin;
Sees, though afar, the hand that heals
And ends her war within.

Oh! let me wing my hallow'd flight
From earth-born wo and care;
And soar beyond these realms of night,
My Saviour's bliss to share.

NOEL.

A BROTHER IN ADVERSITY.

WHEN every scene this side the grave
Seems dark and cheerless to the eye,
How sweet in such an hour to have
A brother in adversity!

When father, mother, all are gone,—
When bursts affection's closest tie,—
How sweet to claim, as still our own,
A brother in adversity!

When frowns an angry world unkind,
And hope's delusive visions fly,
How sweet in such an hour to find
A brother in adversity?

And who is this whom still we find,
When father, mother, husband die,
Still faithful, tender, loving, kind?
A brother in adversity!

Jesus! my Lord! ah, who can trace
Thy love unchanging, full, and free!
Or tell the riches of thy grace,
Thou brother in adversity!

Ye trav'llers in this wilderness,
Who somewhat of his beauty see,
For ever, oh! for ever bless
This brother in adversity?

ANON.

LONGING FOR HEAVEN.

WHEN on the verge of life I stand,
And view the scene on either hand,
My spirit struggles with its clay,
And longs to wing its flight away.

Where Jesus dwells my soul would be,
It faints my much-lov'd Lord to see;
Earth, twine no more about my heart,
For 'tis far better to depart.

Come, ye angelic envoys, come,
And lead the willing pilgrim home;
Ye know the way to Jesu's throne,
Source of my joys, and of our own.

That blessed interview, how sweet!
To fall transported at his feet,
Rais'd in his arms to view his face,
Thro' the full beamings of his grace.

As with a seraph's voice to sing,
To fly as on a cherub's wing,
Performing with unwearied hands
A parent Saviour's high commands.

Yet, with these prospects full in sight,
I'll wait thy signal for my flight;
For while thy service I pursue,
I find my heaven begun below.

THE HEAVENLY REST.

THERE is an hour of peaceful rest
To mourning wand'rers given;
There is a tear for souls distress'd
A balm for every wounded breast;
'Tis found above in heaven!

There is a soft, a downy bed,
'Tis fair as breath of even;
A couch for weary mortals spread,
Where they may rest the aching head,
And find repose in heaven!

There is a home for weary souls
By sin and sorrow driven;
When toss'd on life's tempestuous shoals,
Where storms arise, and ocean rolls,
And all is drear—'tis heaven!

There faith lifts up the tearful eye,
The heart with anguish riven;
And views the tempest passing by,
The evening shadows quickly fly,
And all serene in heaven!

There fragrant flow'rs immortal bloom,
And joys supreme are given;
There rays divine disperse the gloom;
Beyond the confines of the tomb
Appears the dawn of heaven!

TAPPAN.

THE SAINT IN HEAVEN.

Escap'd from earth, I'm tried no more;
Life's hard probation now is o'er;
I've joined the assembly of the blest;
Zion I've reach'd, and now I rest.
Ah! the sweet peace that fills my soul!
But how shall I express the whole?
Eternity itself will fail
To sound its depth, or to reveal
How blest I am! what joy I feel!
Salvation to th' eternal King,
With saints in white I ceaseless sing.
I see the Lamb; and oh, the bliss!
No joy in heaven doth equal this;
But God himself, the Spirit too,
Unveil their glories to my view.
Rapt with delight, my joys above
No end shall have—for God is love!

"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD."

Hark! a voice, it cries from heav'n,
Happy in the Lord who die;
Happy they to whom 'tis given
From a world of grief to fly!

They indeed are truly blest;
From their labours then they rest.

All their toils and conflicts over,
Lo! they dwell with Christ above;
Oh! what glories they discover
In the Saviour whom they love!
Now they see him face to face,
Him who sav'd them by his grace.

'Tis enough, enough for ever,
'Tis his people's bright reward,
They are blest indeed who never
Shall be absent from their Lord!
Oh! that we may die like those
Who in Jesus then repose!

KELLY.

THE END.

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